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*AUTOGRAPHS.*

'Il y a tout dans les lettres autographes; elles promettent autre chose que la satisfaction d'une stérile curiosité; une riche moisson de révélations inespérées y dort en attente. Quelle belle occasion de ne pas laisser périr sur pied les sottises instructives de l'homme! Et puis, à côté des défaillances de la raison et des consciences, que de saintes larmes! quels nobles secrets d'abnégation et de vertu!'

So wrote Feuillet des Conches, one of the most learned, enthusiastic, and indefatigable of modern collectors; whose treasures, now broken up and scattered in Boston, London, Paris, and Chicago, enrich the cabinets of two hemispheres. For the splendid harvest of chance and unlooked-for revelations, no one who has lingered long—as we have lately done—over the folios and the cases where lie the letters and the papers of so many great, so many infamous, so many noteworthy in so many different ways, no one who has done this can fail to echo the truth of the judgment which the author of the '*Causeries d'un Curieux*' delivers. Before, then, we consider, however lightly, anything of the history or antiquity of the taste, let us—opening the pages at random—examine the nature of the harvest they will yield; truly, as it seems to us also, something more than the satisfaction of a barren curiosity.

'More last words,' writes Byron to his wife, his last letter before leaving England, as it proved for ever, in April 1816, 'more last words—not many—but such as you will attend to.' There it lies before us, the large sheet of post, creased and folded and directed to the house in Piccadilly, written on both sides, and signed *your truly, Byron*. Every line speaks to-day to us of the poet's pain and grief; every line of it seems to throb with wounded pride and resentment. He writes of the sister to whom

he was so tenderly attached ; gradually robbed, he cries in bitterness, of all of whom she was ever fond and now finally of himself ; he writes of his child, but scarcely in tones of affection, more indeed in tones of business, of future settlement ; and towards the close refers to their travelling carriage, which, as they took but one short journey in it together, maybe she will have no objection to keep. The letter lies among many others, many of his sister's and his wife's, and next to one from Fletcher, his valet, dated from Missolonghi, April 20, 1824, the day after his death, that touchingly describes the last hours of *the best and kindest of masters to Turk or Christian*, the incoherence, the painful efforts to speak and be understood—'I told my lord I was very sorry, but I had not understood one word of what he'd been saying'—the long night of watching and delirium, the morning's gradual silence, and the peaceful dissolution without a sigh or groan.

Turn a few pages and the stately hand of Charles I. lies before us in all its royal shape and dignity. It is a letter, dated May 29, 1630, to Marie de Medicis, the mother of his wife Henrietta Maria, announcing the birth of the future Charles II., and at the foot of the sheet, in a trembling scrawl, evidently written in bed, runs the signature, 'votre très humble et très obéissante fille et serviteuse, Henriette Marie.' Later, when the Civil War had well begun and troubles were thick, the noble formation of the unfortunate king's hand seems to dwarf and dwindle under the stress of misfortune and disappointment. What a difference between the proud and splendid *Madame* of 1630, the hand of the Stuart strong enough then to rule without his parliament, what a difference between the conscious magnificence of Whitehall and an heir to an unshaken throne that seems to breathe through all that letter to Marie de Medicis, and the nervous and shrunken 4 *acloke* *this Sunday morning*, on the eve of Edge Hill, when the king writes in haste to Rupert—'Nepveu, I have given order as you have desyred, so that I doubt not but all the foot and cannon will be at Egge Hill betymes this Morning, where you will also find your loving oncle and faithfull frend, Charles R.'

And three years later, in July 1645, after Naseby's disaster, are there not humility and almost despair plainly visible in the broken lines wherein he appeals so pathetically to the Irish governor, the faithful James Butler? He calls for arms and help to be despatched at once, at whatever cost to the tranquillity of the country. 'Ormond,' he writes, 'it hath pleased God by many

successive misfortunes to reduce my affaires of late from a very prosperous condition to so low an eb as to be a perfect tryal of all men's integrities to me, and you being a person whom I consider as most entyrelly and generously resolved to stand and fall with your king, I doe principally rely upon you for your utmost assistance in my present hazards.'

The spirit which in those three letters, from Whitehall, from Oxford, and from Cardiff, gradually failed the king—if we may judge from his handwriting—is not wanting in the last letter written by his grandmother, Mary Queen of Scots, dated from Fotheringay, *à deux heures après minuit*, six hours before her execution in the hall of the castle. Here there is no sign of faltering, no haste, no carelessness. Dignity and resignation seem to exhale from the paper whereon the unhappy Mary's hand rested for the last time so steadily, whereof the ink is scarcely faded and the two broad pages scarcely embrowned by time. If you close your eyes you can almost hear her read aloud what she has written. Simply and affectionately she commends her servants to her *beau-frère*, Charles IX. of France, hardly murmurs at or reflects on the sentence that day announced to her by the governor after dinner in the hall as though she were a common felon; merely mentions, and without complaint, that she has not been allowed to make a will; again commends her servants and their wages to him, and sends two precious stones for his health's sake, to be worn round the neck. The letter is well-nigh three hundred years old, and still across that spacious gulf of time seems to touch some of those *saintes larmes* of which the French collector writes so eloquently.

And for *saintes larmes*, what tears more sacred than those that blister old love-letters, than those that have fallen over the trembling signature of the dying? In tender reproach Déjazet cries to one for whom alone she acts, for whom alone she lives; *je ne puis ni lire ni écrire*, sighs Balzac heavily, the day before his death, at the foot of a letter of his wife's; and Eugénie, fond record 'of the old glad days and the old glad life of Spain,' murmurs her happy thanks to a dear friend for his beautiful present, and assures him of her unalterable devotion. What a tragedy here suggested!—*quel noble secret d'abnégation et de vertu* lies behind that thin scrawl, sunk into the flimsy paper, which of us now can know? Family pride or her own ambition, force from without or free-will from within, who can tell which it

was that made her put aside the quiet days in the white country-house with its green blinds and long cool corridors, among the olive groves and cork trees, for the uneasy splendour of the Tuileries and the glitter of Trouville—choose, instead of the peace of the Spanish mountains, the yelling rabble of Paris, the disguise, the hurried flight, the exile?

Turn the pages where you will, anyhow, anywhere—there is always something to make you laugh, to make you sigh, to make you think. ‘As to the k—,’ scribbles the Princess Charlotte, ‘I understand he is as mad as puss, and no chance, I believe, whatever of his recovery.’ Over that, can you not both laugh and sigh?

Hear giddy Kitty Clive to her dear Garrick, from Twickenham, in the frost and snow of January 1776. ‘I schreemed at your parish business. I think I see you in your church wardenship quariling with the baker for not making their Brown loaves big enough; but for God sake never think of being a justice of peice, for the people will quarill on purpos to be brought before you to hear you talk, so that you may have as much business upon the lawn as you had upon the boards; if I should live to be thaw’d I will come to town on purpos to *kiss* you, and go the summer as you say. I hope we will see each other ten times as often, when we will talk and dance and sing, and send our hearers Laughing to their Beds.’ *Il y a tout dans les lettres autographes*—one must be surprised at nothing on which one lights. Not even at a letter from the arch-rogué Cagliostro, written to his wife in terms of the deepest affection, during his detention in the Bastille for the ‘*affaire du Collier*,’ and assuring his ‘*amata sposa e cara Sarafina*’ of his complete innocence. The innocence was a lie, but the affection was true; one has only to read through the letter to be sure of that.

And not far from Cagliostro lies the passport of ‘*la citoyenne Marie Corday*,’ dated from Caen, April 8, 1793, the passport that gave her authority and assistance to go to Paris and assassinate Marat. From it we learn that Charlotte Marie Corday was ‘*agé de 24 ans; taille de 5 pieds 1 pou.; cheveux et sourcils châains; yeux gris; front élevé; nez longue; bouche moyenne; menton rond, fourchu; visage oval.*’ Friends of the Republic are bidden to give her every help *en route* to make her journey plain; the same friends, we imagine—*aux Français, amis de loix et de la paix*—to whom the address found in her pocket after the murder was directed; an address rambling, incoherent, breaking into an



occasional irregular chant of verse; that declares, moreover, her conviction how the well-being of France depends alone on the death of the tyrant.

Here, too, on grey paper in villainous blunt type, lowers the condemnation of the infamous Carrier for his participation in, nay, instigation of, the *noyades* at Nantes; if, indeed, that condemnation were still wanting to the minds of any. It is dated the 4 frimaire, An. 2 (November 24, 1793), and orders the naval authorities to compel boatmen on the Loire between Nantes and Saumur to keep the left bank—‘*sous peine d’être regardés et punis comme traîtres à la patrie.*’ Jacques Carrier, it is clear, was fearful of the rescue of his victims.

Here is the original despatch of Monk and Blake, announcing the victory over the Dutch under Van Tromp, in June 1653; here, a humorous letter of Beethoven’s, with the usual illegible signature; here, on April 13, 1564, Cellini excuses himself from attending the obsequies of Michael Angelo on the ground of ill-health; and here, in 1593, Cervantes acknowledges a sum of money, probably from a bookseller, for the sum is small.

So much in brief support of the quotation from Feuillet des Conches with which we head this paper. Let us now consider rapidly, with what lightness of touch the lumber of the many centuries we have searched will permit, the antecedents and historical position of the collector of autographs.

First, for antiquity. Down the long corridor of time, dim in the distance is descried one Atossa, of whom no more is known than the somewhat negative term—that she was *not* the mother of Darius. But if not the mother of Darius, she was, maybe, the grand parent à tous of the autograph collector, for—*πρώτην ἐπιστολὰς συντάξαι* “*Ἀτοσσαν τὴν Περσῶν βασιλεύσασάν φησιν Ἑλλάνικος*; unless, indeed, *συντάσσω* is here equivalent to *συγγράφω*—which to us appears more than probable—and then must Atossa step from her proud pedestal of the first of amateurs to become the first of lady-correspondents; a class held, be it said, somewhat at a distance by the collector, almost his bane, from their vice of rarely dating their letters. From the uncertain Atossa down to Cicero is a breathless, but a necessary, leap; and there the flight is worth it, for with Cicero we are on solid ground and not on cloud shapes, as with Atossa. Cicero, as every schoolboy will expect, draws a just distinction between the judicious and the injudicious amateur, between the monomaniac and him who

intelligently follows a sequence of interest and history. 'Ista studia,' he writes, 'si ad imitandos summos viros spectant, ingeniosorum sunt; sin tantummodo ad indicia veteris memoriæ cognoscenda, curiosorum.' Is there not there plainly visible, or audible, what is vulgarly called a *slap* at those absurdities of collections, or collections of absurdities, we all have met with or heard of? A *slap* at the imbecile who collects only love-letters, or only mad letters, or only letters written by those of one and the same name, or of criminals, or even stray papers of any kind, the *papiers abandonnés* of the French amateur? The fact is, men can be found to collect anything; they have been found to collect only ropes that have, as one may delicately put it, passed through the hands of Calcraft and his successors; nay, in the old days, to collect the very bodies themselves, and inscribe the cabinet with the terrible legend in letters of gold:—

A case of skeletons well done,  
And malefactors every one!

*Istud studium*, then, Cicero was of opinion might well claim the attention of the educated and accomplished, so long only as it afforded some example, fit and proper for imitation, of the most distinguished of the day or of the past. Of his collection, beyond that he had a very fine one, we know next to nothing; scarcely anything, indeed, of any of the collections of antiquity beyond the fact that they once existed. Quintilian speaks of seeing manuscripts of Cicero, Virgil, Augustus, and Cato the Censor, but believed that when once copied they were not kept; Aulus Gellius had seen a manuscript of the 'Georgics'; Suetonius, letters and memoirs of Cæsar. Pliny the Elder mentions as a great collector one Pompeius Secundus, eminent citizen and poet, and writes he had seen at his house papers by Tiberius and Caius Gracchus, and autographs of Cicero, Augustus, and Virgil. Pliny himself had a collection valued during his lifetime at over 3,000*l.*, chiefly formed as it appears from that of Mucianus, thrice consul, who is quoted by Tacitus as having published of his treasures fourteen volumes, eleven of letters, and three of *causes célèbres*. This collection of Pliny the Elder was kept by Pliny the Younger, and has gone now who can tell where, unless it be into the maw of the northern barbarians. Or, perhaps, *lent and lost*, as pathetic a title it seems to us as *loved and lost*; *lent and lost*, that accounts for the disappearance of so much; that unhappily accounts for the 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey,' contemporary with Homer,

seen at Athens by Libanius, sophist of Antioch, and gone to the sausage-maker or the pie-seller; that accounts for the papers of Burnet the historian, original documents and letters lent to him and by him sent in their integrity to the printer to save the trouble of copying, and so lost; that accounts for the correspondence between Maitland and Mary Queen of Scots, lent to a Lauderdale, and by him, judiciously, lost.

Egypt is the only country in the world where, thanks to the manners—for you cannot very well lend out of a relative's hermetically sealed tomb—and thanks to the climate, papyri have come down to us older than Moses. Two more references to the antique and we have done with it, for the antique is out of fashion. We have quoted from modern letters, the actual documents, to give some idea of what may be the interest of their contents; let us quote now from ancient tablets, or rather from their transcripts as they appear in the annals of Suetonius. In his *Life of Cæsar Augustus*, in the seventy-first chapter, referring to Augustus' gaming propensities, Suetonius quotes from a letter under the emperor's own hand, in which he says, 'I supped, my dear Tiberius, with the same company. We had, besides, Vinicius and Silvius the father. We gamed at supper like old fellows, both yesterday and to-day. And as any one threw upon the *tali* [dice with four oblong sides] aces or sixes, he put down for every *talus* a denarius; all which was gained by him who threw a Venus [the highest cast].' In another letter he writes, 'We had, my dear Tiberius, a pleasant time of it during the festival of Minerva: for we played every day and kept the gaming-board warm. Your brother uttered many exclamations at a desperate run of ill-fortune; but, recovering by degrees and unexpectedly, he in the end lost not much. I lost twenty thousand sesterces for my part; but then I was profusely generous in my play, as I commonly am; for had I insisted upon the stakes which I declined, or kept what I gave away, I should have won about fifty thousand. But this I like better; for it will raise my character for generosity to the skies.' In a letter to his daughter: 'I have sent you two hundred and fifty denarii, which I gave to every one of my guests; in case they were inclined at supper to divert themselves with the *tali*, or at the game of even-or-odd.' And in the eighty-seventh chapter, in commenting upon the peculiarities and affectations of Augustus in ordinary conversation—how, for instance, he would substitute one word for another, and the accusative plural for the

genitive singular, and, in a word, have all the tricks of fashionable talk—Suetonius concludes by saying, ‘I have likewise remarked this singularity in his handwriting; he never divides his words, so as to carry his letters which cannot be inserted at the end of a line to the next, but puts them below the other, inclosed by a bracket.’

Our second reference is to the Life of Nero, where in the fifty-second chapter we hear of the emperor’s turn for poetry, which he composed both with pleasure and ease; nor did he, says Suetonius, as some think, publish those of other writers as his own. In fact, writes his biographer, ‘several little pocket-books and loose sheets have come into my possession, which contain some well-known verses in his own hand, and written in such a manner that it was very evident, from the blotting and interlining, that they had not been transcribed from a copy, nor dictated by another, but were written by the composer of them.’

So much for the handwriting of Cæsar Augustus and the poetry of Nero. From them both must we now turn to a Bohemian country gentleman (there being nothing between), who, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, in a book that contained his exploits of the chase, first collected the signatures of his friends; in testimony, we imagine, either to the truth of what he wrote or of some similar adventures of their own. Between Cæsar Augustus and the Bohemian squire lie the dark ages of the autograph collector, the good times for the mediæval pastrycook, when ignorance and the barbarian did their worst on the treasures of the past. Documents so carefully kept were in those days as carelessly destroyed, either from the popular suspicion that they treated of magic—for instance, the manuscripts of Pythagoras at Athens—or were accounted for by the ravaging Northmen, or consumed by a more inexcusable process even still—by which some of the most interesting records of this country met their fate about forty years ago—and to which we shall presently revert. From whatever cause, autographs follow much the same upward and downward career as *belles lettres*, and, owing to wholesale destruction, until the renaissance of learning, when copies of important manuscripts began to be kept by the monks and to pass to the libraries, there is scarcely a writing handed down to to-day on which the gravest suspicion of its genuineness has not been cast by the expert.

The Bohemian squire of 1507, with his *Album Amicorum*,

the signatures and the marks of his great hunter friends, is the first of modern collectors, and be it noted that he collected only the signatures of his *friends*, for friendship's sake and not for curiosity. The custom became fashionable and almost universal in Germany, not only with the hunter but with the traveller; young fellows on the grand tour, who on returning would produce their *alba* in proof of the good company they kept while on the road; and of these little books there are five or six hundred to be seen in the manuscript department of the British Museum, the earliest dated 1554, in the Egerton collection, and one containing the almost priceless signature of Milton. By that time, the time of Milton, the friendly habit of the Bohemian squire had grown and altered, and at the close of the century the *alba* contained the names and sentiments of mere acquaintances and strangers, written often under their coats-of-arms, splendidly illuminated with their legends and mottoes; and often were mere registers of genealogy, proofs of gentility for tourneys, *Stammbücher* as they were called, whereby a gentleman could give evidence of his breeding and the right to match his quarterings against another's. From the nobility the *Stammbücher* descended to the gentry and the *bourgeoisie*—there is one extant, peculiarly magnificent, the property once of a Nuremberg master-flautist—nor was it long before the usage became entirely general, nor long before every student possessed one to identify his origin, his faith, his university, his titles, and his patrons. The wandering seeker after knowledge who passed through the different universities, or the Leipsic freshman newly arrived, would present himself before the world-renowned professor or college tutor for advice and guidance in general or particular, and at the same time produce his album for some scrap of learning to be inserted in it. 'I shall not leave you,' says the scholar in Goethe's tragedy to Mephistopheles, dressed in the robe and bonnet of the learned doctor Faust, 'I shall not leave you without presenting my album: deign to honour it with a souvenir from your hand.' 'Very gladly,' replies Mephistopheles, and writing in it returns it to him; and the scholar reads, 'Thou shalt be like unto God, knowing the good and the evil!' Whereupon, having got his advice and now his sentiment, the scholar salutes the fiend respectfully and withdraws.

There is a story told in Izaak Walton's 'Life of Sir Henry Wotton' that very clearly illustrates the mode of writing in these *alba*, at any rate in the seventeenth century. Sir Henry was at

the time our ambassador at Venice, and passing thence through Germany stayed at Angusta, a town we take to be now better recognised as Dresden. There, being well known from his former travels, he spent many evenings in decorous merriment, and one in particular at the house of a certain Christopher Flecamore, where there was presented to him an album for some sentiment, opinion, or apothegm, to be graciously written in it above his signature. Sir Henry might, indeed, have followed the practice of that archbishop who to such an application is wont to reply, 'Sir, I never gave my autograph and I never will. Yours truly, Ebor'—or Cantuar. as the case may be; or, at least, of the politic bishop who invariably inscribes his at the top of the sheet, leaving no room above it for an I O U; but unfortunately he did neither, for not being then so industriously watchful over tongue and pen as he claims the incident later made him, he in thoughtlessness placed over his indisputable signature this pleasant and light-hearted definition of an ambassador: 'Legatus est vir bonus peregre missus ad mentiendum reipublicæ causâ'—an ambassador is a worthy soul sent to *lie* abroad for the good of his country—a pun, no doubt, of one kind or another in English, but none in Latin. There, in the album, slept the pleasant definition of an ambassador for eight long years, slept there unregarded except by mirth, until one Jasper Scioppius, a Romanist, of a restless spirit and a malicious pen, who had vented much gall on the royal James himself, the principles of his religion, and his representative at Venice, there discovered, unearthed, and published it, with the observation that this was ever the practice of the English in general and Sir Henry Wotton in particular—*mentiri reipublicæ causâ*. The pleasant definition was even scrawled on many windows of Venetian glass, and declared by countersign to be Sir Henry's. Then did Sir Henry, startled and hurt, write two *apologies*, or explanations, one in Latin to Velsenus, literary chief of Angusta, by him printed and scattered over Germany and Italy; and one to King James, *in genius clear*, says Walton, *and choicely eloquent*; and thereupon did the royal scholar, a *pure judge* in such matters, publicly declare before the court that Sir Henry Wotton had commuted publicly for a far greater offence; and as broken bones well set will become the stronger, so for this slight fracture did Sir Henry's friends become trebly dear, for the incident taught him which were the friends of fair and which of foul weather, who would stand by him in storm and who were only for the sunshine. And,



further, it taught him that industrious guard over tongue and pen which never after slumbered or grew weary.

Later, each chose his book, whatever it might be, and interleaved and illustrated it; and as sects and parties flourished, with their various literature and various chiefs, so flourished these *alba*, and presented with quotations and signatures an epitome of the matters in dispute and the men disputing.

It was in the seventeenth century that the collector of documents and autographs for curiosity's sake, and not for friendship's, first appears in the person of Loménie de Brienne, ambassador of Henry IV., who died in 1638, and whose collection, arranged by Dupuy, was acquired by Louis XIV. and placed by him in the royal library. This Dupuy, with his brother Paul, were about the same time for forty years engaged in forming a collection of crown treaties and letters, ultimately left by them to Louis XIII. These were the first collections, for curiosity's sake, of documents and letters of eminent officials, accumulating in the hands of the ambassadors and other public men, and by them exchanged and sold. And as in France so in England, where Evelyn and Ralph Thoresby the antiquary, and a little later Harley and Sir R. Cotton, began to arrange the letters of their eminent friends and to see the future historical value of the papers of the day. Until the year 1822 all transactions connected with collections, all sales and transfers, were effected privately; in that year, for the first time, autographs were disposed of publicly and singly.

We have written at some length of the main and legitimate treasures of a great collection: it will not, then, perhaps be altogether out of place if we refer briefly to some of the lighter pieces, the clipt coins, the make-weights as it were, of which most portfolios, unless ruthlessly purged, have their share. Sometimes it is an array of the signatures of forgers, the receipts of Fauntleroy, the letters of Roupell, Paul, and Sadleir, sometimes the scrawl of Calcraft, or of Oxford the would-be regicide; sometimes the early efforts of those afterwards destined to greatness, the copy-book of 'William Pitt, July 19, 1770,' in which in a great round pothook hand is to be seen: 'True glory is scarcely known: *Virtus parvo pretio licet omnibus.*' Such seem to us, as we have said in echo of Cicero, scarcely worthy of the *ingeniosus*, and better fitted for the *curiosus*; though to which the following should be relegated;—Falconer's log-book, his marine observations of flying fish and sharks interspersed with snatches of verse; a letter of Charles Lamb's, recom-

mending a nurse for any one requiring restraint; a poem of Cotton's, the friend of Walton, 'Against old men taking physic;' a strange up-and-down performance of John O'Keefe's, the blind dramatist; fragments bearing the bold *Jacques R.* of the Old Pretender; a scrawl of Morland's, declaring how 'damned drunk' he had been the night before; receipts for Jamaica negroes and negresses in 1800, from which we find they averaged, both sexes alike, from a hundred to a hundred and ten pounds;—whether those are best suited to the *curiosus* or the *ingeniosus*, we leave others to decide.

It can readily be guessed that to so many records of so many great, so many notorious, there must be strange stories attached; that there must be thefts, concealments, abstractions, substitutions, and many of them, before Henry VIII. can rest at last in a private portfolio, or Shakespeare lie even in the sanctuary of the British Museum. Some of the most interesting of the Byron correspondence was purloined by a housemaid of his sister's, and by that housemaid's admirer pawned, of which illegal pledge in a fit of remorse and impecuniosity he delivered the tickets. How strange must have been the career of that last letter of Mary Queen of Scots, to get into the archives of the Irish college at Paris, and thence into the private hands it did at the Revolution! The Revolution goes for much in autographs, for much change, for much displacement, and, above all, for much destruction. Those days, when the archives of the Vatican and the libraries of the conquered towns were brought to Paris, were great days for pastrycooks and, through them, for amateurs; but they were days that had their dark hours as well, for in 1789 some of the most precious of the public documents of France were used as '*propres à faire des gargousses*'—just the thing for cartridge-cases!—and, in 1793, numbers of invaluable letters, among them the whole correspondence of Turenne and Louis XIV., were burnt amid cries of '*Plus de nobles, plus de titres de noblesse, plus de savans, plus d'écrits d'eux, plus de livres!*'

We, too, here in England have had our Vandalism, not of passion and ignorance, but of carelessness and indifference. It was to that we referred above when we wrote of an inexcusable destruction of records of forty years ago, of public documents that contained much of the history of the country from Henry VII. to George IV. To expose it dramatically, in action, the story is briefly this.

On a day in the year 1840, there calls at a fishmonger's shop in Old Hungerford Market, kept by a Yarmouth man named Jay, a friend, himself from Yarmouth, no fishmonger, but a connoisseur and collector of autographs—with, moreover, a sick son, for whom he desired to buy soles. He buys his soles, and they are wrapped for him in a large stiff sheet of paper, torn from a folio volume that stands at Jay's elbow on the dresser, and with that the connoisseur goes home, and, unwrapping the soles, delivers them to the cook; when, there on the large stiff sheet of paper his well-trained eye catches the signatures of Godolphin, Sunderland, Ashley, Lauderdale. The wrapping of the soles is a sheet of the victualling charges for prisoners in the Tower, in the reign of James II., and the signatures are those of his ministers.

Any other man must have given some sign, have gone off to tell somebody; not so the connoisseur, but he takes his hat and stick, and, whistling a bit, walks back straight into Jay's shop, the shop of his fellow-townsmen, and he buys a whiting, and he says, 'That's pretty good paper of yours, Jay,' says he; and Jay says, 'Yes, it is, but plaguy stiff,' wrapping the whiting in another great sheet of the folio, and adds, 'I've got a good bit of it, too; I got it from Somerset House.'

The connoisseur's heart gives a great leap, but, the hero of a hundred bargains, he remains cool and asks the price of cod. 'Fivepence,' returns Jay: 'they advertised ten ton of waste paper, and I offered seven pound a ton, which they took, d'ye see? And I've got three ton of it in the stables, and the other seven they keep till I want it.' 'All like this?' asks the connoisseur, faint with expectancy. 'Pretty much,' replies Jay, 'all odds and ends.'

The connoisseur goes home, with whiting, with cod, with mackerel, with skate, with parcels of every kind of fish for his poor fanciful sick son, and moreover with a great bundle of these precious papers from Somerset House, handed over to him carelessly by his fellow-townsmen Jay, who knows his friend's little weakness for rubbish and fragments, and obligingly sends round to the stables for an armful for him. And, safe at home, the connoisseur casts the fish on the floor, and uncreases the papers, and his head swims as he looks on accounts of the Exchequer Office signed by Henry VII. and Henry VIII., wardrobe accounts of Queen Anne, and dividend receipts signed by Pope, Newton, Dryden, and Wren. He is obliged to throw up the window for air, as in his armful he discovers secret service accounts marked

mending a nurse for any one requiring restraint; a poem of Cotton's, the friend of Walton, 'Against old men taking physic;' a strange up-and-down performance of John O'Keefe's, the blind dramatist; fragments bearing the bold *Jacques R.* of the Old Pretender; a scrawl of Morland's, declaring how 'damned drunk' he had been the night before; receipts for Jamaica negroes and negresses in 1800, from which we find they averaged, both sexes alike, from a hundred to a hundred and ten pounds;—whether those are best suited to the *curiosus* or the *ingeniosus*, we leave others to decide.

It can readily be guessed that to so many records of so many great, so many notorious, there must be strange stories attached; that there must be thefts, concealments, abstractions, substitutions, and many of them, before Henry VIII. can rest at last in a private portfolio, or Shakespeare lie even in the sanctuary of the British Museum. Some of the most interesting of the Byron correspondence was purloined by a housemaid of his sister's, and by that housemaid's admirer pawned, of which illegal pledge in a fit of remorse and impecuniosity he delivered the tickets. How strange must have been the career of that last letter of Mary Queen of Scots, to get into the archives of the Irish college at Paris, and thence into the private hands it did at the Revolution! The Revolution goes for much in autographs, for much change, for much displacement, and, above all, for much destruction. Those days, when the archives of the Vatican and the libraries of the conquered towns were brought to Paris, were great days for pastrycooks and, through them, for amateurs; but they were days that had their dark hours as well, for in 1789 some of the most precious of the public documents of France were used as '*propres à faire des gargousses*'—just the thing for cartridge-cases!—and, in 1793, numbers of invaluable letters, among them the whole correspondence of Turenne and Louis XIV., were burnt amid cries of '*Plus de nobles, plus de titres de noblesse, plus de savans, plus d'écrits d'eux, plus de livres!*'

We, too, here in England have had our Vandalism, not of passion and ignorance, but of carelessness and indifference. It was to that we referred above when we wrote of an inexcusable destruction of records of forty years ago, of public documents that contained much of the history of the country from Henry VII. to George IV. To expose it dramatically, in action, the story is briefly this.

On a day in the year 1840, there calls at a fishmonger's shop in Old Hungerford Market, kept by a Yarmouth man named Jay, a friend, himself from Yarmouth, no fishmonger, but a connoisseur and collector of autographs—with, moreover, a sick son, for whom he desired to buy soles. He buys his soles, and they are wrapped for him in a large stiff sheet of paper, torn from a folio volume that stands at Jay's elbow on the dresser, and with that the connoisseur goes home, and, unwrapping the soles, delivers them to the cook; when, there on the large stiff sheet of paper his well-trained eye catches the signatures of Godolphin, Sunderland, Ashley, Lauderdale. The wrapping of the soles is a sheet of the victualling charges for prisoners in the Tower, in the reign of James II., and the signatures are those of his ministers.

Any other man must have given some sign, have gone off to tell somebody; not so the connoisseur, but he takes his hat and stick, and, whistling a bit, walks back straight into Jay's shop, the shop of his fellow-townsmen, and he buys a whiting, and he says, 'That's pretty good paper of yours, Jay,' says he; and Jay says, 'Yes, it is, but plaguy stiff,' wrapping the whiting in another great sheet of the folio, and adds, 'I've got a good bit of it, too; I got it from Somerset House.'

The connoisseur's heart gives a great leap, but, the hero of a hundred bargains, he remains cool and asks the price of cod. 'Fivepence,' returns Jay: 'they advertised ten ton of waste paper, and I offered seven pound a ton, which they took, d'ye see? And I've got three ton of it in the stables, and the other seven they keep till I want it.' 'All like this?' asks the connoisseur, faint with expectancy. 'Pretty much,' replies Jay, 'all odds and ends.'

The connoisseur goes home, with whiting, with cod, with mackerel, with skate, with parcels of every kind of fish for his poor fanciful sick son, and moreover with a great bundle of these precious papers from Somerset House, handed over to him carelessly by his fellow-townsmen Jay, who knows his friend's little weakness for rubbish and fragments, and obligingly sends round to the stables for an armful for him. And, safe at home, the connoisseur casts the fish on the floor, and uncreases the papers, and his head swims as he looks on accounts of the Exchequer Office signed by Henry VII. and Henry VIII., wardrobe accounts of Queen Anne, and dividend receipts signed by Pope, Newton, Dryden, and Wren. He is obliged to throw up the window for air, as in his armful he discovers secret service accounts marked

with the E. G. of Nell Gwynne, a treatise on the Eucharist in the boyish hand of Edward VI., and a disquisition on the Order of the Garter in the scholarly writing of Elizabeth. The Government, in disposing by tender of their old papers to Jay, the fishmonger, have disposed of memorials of those whom, if the country has not most reason to be proud of, she has at least most reason to remember.

During the next week or so the connoisseur is scarcely ever out of Jay's shop, and shows so lively a regard for Jay's conversation and old rubbishing papers that Jay scarcely knows whether to admire or pity him. On one pretext or another he constantly carries off little bundles and wrappers, and so might have continued till the supply was exhausted had he not, like a true connoisseur, begun to exhibit his treasures, and with many pokes and winks detail his own astonishing astuteness and Jay's credulity. First, cautiously enough, to his own immediate relatives, to an uncle whose tastes are similar, and who raids on Jay with a spring cart; but soon the news spreads, and there are so many of these fishy visits paid to Jay that he begins to suspect their purport, and, overhauling what is left of his three tons, forthwith and henceforth wraps his turbot in the 'Morning Star' and gives the wardrobe accounts of Queen Anne a rest. And now the Government are roused to a sense of their loss. Are there thieves at Somerset House? Whence, otherwise, comes it that letters of Cardinal Wolsey to his king are in the market? Whence, that the correspondence between Clement VII. and Henry VIII. on the subject of his divorce are in the possession of a dealer willing to part with them again for gold? These precious papers are, and ever have been, Government property: what rat has gnawed his way into the ancient chests and let the winds of heaven so wantonly scatter them?

Then the whole affair is blown, and the public clamour for a committee of inquiry; and, while the committee sits, hirelings descend into the vaults of Somerset House, and by the official order so mutilate poor Jay's remaining seven tons (with which he had flattered himself he would much more advantageously deal than with the first three), that except for sprat-wrapping and the veriest herring purposes, for which, after all, they were sold, they are useless; and, to complete the tale of his misfortunes, the devouring element makes short work of his stables and all that was left of the early delivery of these priceless records; so that at



the end Jay, of Hungerford Market, finds himself pretty much where he began, except for the reputation so hardly won of having for some three weeks wrapped soles in official folio documents which the British Museum would have been only too proud to place under their best ground glass. In the words of the old law reports, Jay takes scarcely anything by his motion.

Finally, your committee exonerate and acquit every one blamed or accused, with the exception of the thoughtless Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Monteagle; though, be it said, they are wound somewhat to frenzy pitch on learning from the mouth of an expert that this 70*l.* tender of old paper was at the lowest worth some 3,000*l.*

One little incident that, like a mountain daisy, turns up among these rather arid questions and answers, may be culled and preserved with care. Among all these papers there were some hundreds and thousands of parchment strips, the meaning and use of which has never been quite clear, unless, as occurs to us, they are the writs delivered to the burgesses and knights of the shire, and by the sheriffs redelivered on the members' attendance. Whatever their object and explanation, many sacks full of them were bought from Jay by one Isinglass, a noted confectioner of the year 1840. But what Isinglass could want with strips of parchment in which he could not possibly wrap anything—except, perhaps, ladies' fingers, which he didn't manufacture—was a puzzle to your committee, who, objecting to being puzzled, pressed the unhappy confectioner on the point, and he, driven into a corner, admitted that, when reduced by boiling, they made the most admirable jelly.

If the above experience of the connoisseur will not entirely account for many strange documents in many strange hands, there are a hundred other ways by which Oliver Cromwell may descend to a scrap-album and Catherine of Arragon find herself at last in a portfolio in incongruous companionship with Almagro, Alfieri, and Ariosto. There are old houses, are there not, and old chests that remain spring-locked for almost as many centuries as the years during which the bride of the 'Mistletoe Bough' lay cramped and caught in one of them? There are niches and vases—elsewhere than at Batheaston—that still contain their verses and love letters, as the Flora holds hers in the play, while the places where they lie hid pass through hands as unsuspecting as those through which the *secrétaire* with guineas in the secret

drawer passes, till some odd accident brings them both to light, a housemaid more conscientious than any these hundred and fifty years, or a chance touch of the secret spring. For 1,700 years, love messages slumbered on the walls of Pompeii—*Sylvanus is my heart's darling!—Julia I burn for only!—Evander is my dear!* scratched with a *stylus*, as the baker's boy scratched his impudences on Mr. Briggs' front gate. For a hundred years a packet of love letters was tucked away in a niche in Westminster Abbey: a correspondence between whom; intercepted who can tell how? For four hundred years letters of Warwick the king-maker have lain at Belvoir, and have only just been unearthed in a trunk over the stables; and for two hundred, and more, all the correspondence between Cromwell and *Dear Dick*, his son, relative to the choice of the lady he subsequently married, remained unsuspected in an old house in Hampshire.

As when a family breaks and flies asunder like a fractured wheel, and each lays hands for himself on the fragments he most covets, as they steal at a fire and the thief makes off unnoticed, so, are there not servants sufficiently composed in the disorder to pass over watches and snuff-boxes and buckles, and carry off the correspondence of the founder of the house with William of Orange, or the love letters of Pope to the charming woman whose portrait once smiled in the eating-parlour, and smiles now, alas! in King Street, St. James's? For a watch is ever a watch, consider, and in the march of fashion, crabbed though it often is, still will lose its value and fall to be worth only its mere metal weight; but time that steals is ever elsewhere adding, as the sea adds and steals, and each day that passes, to thin the dial-plate and rob the buckle of its elegance, flips an infinitesimal doil of gold-dust into the scale, wherein, in the other balance, there hangs the original of 'Auld Lang Syne,' or the actual copy of 'When We Two Parted.'

In the story-telling vein, and as a pendant to Mr. Jay, let us give a melancholy instance of this, how it comes to pass that Queen Anne, with her *Monsieur mon frère* to Louis XIV., has the thumb-mark of a potboy immediately under her royal sign-manual, and is for sale at Shepherd's Bush. In the frost and the snow of the Crimean winter, there was to be seen, shuffling with broken boots through Wild Street, Drury Lane, one of those melancholy figures the observant Londoner will usually associate with the wheeze of a clarionet and the glare of a public-house

door. Under Miserrimus' arm, almost the only dry part of him, was tightly held a little brown paper parcel, which, presently, entering a small bookseller's shop, was unfastened and the contents spread on the counter for sale. There happened to be present at the time a well-known dealer, who with half a glance detected the value of the store exposed. He had heard of the crumpled and sodden figure, hanging about with his mysterious parcel and timidly trying unfrequented shops to see if they would buy, and had long been on the look-out for him, and now the wash of a London backwater had thrown him at his feet. He waited about outside till Miserrimus had driven his bargain, and then, getting alongside of him shuffling off in the slush, remarked that if ever he saw a man whom brandy-and-water would in that weather do no harm to, Miserrimus was he. It was the work of a moment—as the elder novelists say—to get Miserrimus into a neighbouring bar parlour, and, once there, to induce him to open his parcel and let the dealer see what it still contained.

Most strange! Why, one would fancy the poor wretch had had the ransacking of Longwood after great Caesar's death; one would fancy him let loose in the little room with military furniture, diving and groping among the papers and stuffing his pockets with them, while the little corporal, scarcely cold, lay still and with his terrible brow and eye at rest now, prevented him not! For there, in the bar parlour on the stained table, Miserrimus turned out half the secrets of St. Helena! Under the reeking paraffine lamp lay letters to the ministry on the conduct of the exile and prisoner; complaints of the illustrious prisoner himself as to his brutal *espionage*; letters of Bertrand, Montholon, LasCasas, O'Meara; reports even of the sentries under the sitting-room window, returned from hour to hour, almost from minute to minute: 5.40: *N. rises from the table and crosses the room*—5.45: *returns and seats himself*—6.10: *comes to the window*—6.20: *lamp brought and blind drawn*—6.40: *shadow on blind in conversation—Who?—Not O'M.*

Miserrimus gulps his brandy-and-water, and the dealer purchases, asking no senseless questions. What does it matter to him who his client may be? A St. Helenist, with a soft corner for the girl who did the great man's room; a drunken, discharged footman; a son of Bertrand's who has quarrelled with his father; a fortunate speculator in old papers when Longwood was cleared; nay, even if it were Sir Hudson himself, disclaimed by the

ministry, down on his luck and dogged by imperialist avengers, what does it matter to him, so long as he gets the pick of the basket and gives a fair price? And that is just what he does, and so entirely to Miserrimus's satisfaction, that he eschews the gentleman in Wild Street, Drury Lane, and henceforth restricts himself to his new friend, to whom during the next ten or eleven months he constantly shuffles, with his little brown paper parcel under his arm, ever containing something astonishing, interesting, and, above all, genuine. They are his only means of livelihood now, he explains, these papers, however they came into his possession; and for the next ten or eleven months he spins for himself a resting-place out of them, like the spider out of his bowels; keeps a roof over his head, as it appeared later, at the cost of his very entrails.

At length the end comes, and Miserrimus trudges his last journey down to Fleet Street, throws the last of them down on the counter. 'That's all!' says he, blinking his creasy eyelids and rubbing his trembling knuckles—'that's all, the rest's rubbish!' The dealer, who knows the different views of rubbish taken by different authorities, persuades his friend to allow him to go home with him, and see this rubbish for himself, and there, at the crazy top of a crazy Clare Market house, dives among the residue at the bottom of a huge trunk, and, among other strange fragments, turns up a cross of the Order of St. Catherine of Jerusalem, an order instituted by the unfortunate Brunswick with the precious Bergamo as Grand Master. 'Mine!' chuckles Miserrimus, and, with a yell of laughter, pins the flimsy over a stain on his coat and struts up and down the attic in it.

And who was Miserrimus, who had shuffled backwards and forwards for well-nigh a year between Clare Market and Fleet Street, with the materials for secret history under his tattered arm and the cross of St. Catherine of Jerusalem at the bottom of his trunk; who had purveyed and parted with in that time more than eleven hundred documents of the deepest interest—who was he to have in his custody these so-precious papers, that were afterwards eagerly bought by the French Emperor and the representatives of the families to whom they related? Miserrimus, who then straightway disappeared and was no more seen in Fleet Street, went elsewhere, either to earn a livelihood some other way, or to go the road of all who will not work and so shall not eat—who, indeed, was he? *Truly*, as the song says, *truly* we

know, but may not say. Sufficient, surely, that whatever way you regard him, whether from above or below, he was, indeed, as we have named him—Miserrimus!

And now it will be expected that we write something on the subject of forgeries, which are, after all, more or less closely connected with autographs; though, as our space narrows, we will not treat, as at length we might, of the shameless rogue who, after a long and successful career among the inexperienced, overleaps himself at last by the production of Julius Cæsar's despatches in the original French, or the correspondence between Pontius Pilate and Judas Iscariot in the original German! Nor of him, a little higher in the scale of cheats, who in the guise of Dr. Goldsmith writes to Reynolds as *My dear Sir Joshua*, two years before he was made a knight, or indites an elegant epistle of Dr. Doddridge on paper that, when held up to the light, discovers a watermark of 1824. These are trifles of accuracy that may well escape a mind full of other more important detail, and must not detain us now. Turn we instead to the ingenious manufacturer of letters of Henry VIII., Rabelais, and Dunois, the Bastard of Orleans; masterpieces which, long the gem of many a well-known collection, first saw the light in an obscure garret *au sixième* in Paris; masterpieces which, once the pride and glory of the *virtuoso*, unhappily reached their *αἰσιμον ἡμῶν* when Dunois was knocked down amid derision for a pound, the fair price of ingenuity; and Rabelais, discovered to be a *pasticcio* of phrases picked from other correspondence, went for five-and-twenty shillings.

The true artist in antique letters has two main difficulties to contend with—paper and ink; for he must be supplied with paper of the time, that is indispensable to his craft. No doubt our friend Jay, though not of course intentionally, would have been able to drive a fine trade in this commodity, but for misadventure and interference. Next he takes an ink which, as far as chemical ingredients can help him, will assume quickly the decomposed appearance true ink acquires with age, and therein lies the forger's weak point. No chemical knowledge has yet enabled him to obtain the peculiar look of old ink which has decomposed gradually, and which shows the thinner and thicker flow as the pen is laid on. The false ink decomposes equally, the letters being of the same regular tone of colour, but often varying in depth, from pale and thin to dark and thick in places. As for his models for working from, they are to be found and are easily accessible in any of the

great national libraries, and an abundant source is also available in all works of facsimile, notably the famous 'Isographie des Hommes Célèbres.' The close imitation of these is a study of a life, and leads to such perfection that it demands the highest skill to enable an expert to detect the falsity where the forger has not ventured so boldly upon his work as to produce an original letter.

Then it is he makes his mistake, the inevitable mistake of the rogue—then comes the *αἴσιμον ἥμαρ*. 'One can be sharper than the individual,' says La Rochefoucauld, 'but not sharper than all the individuals.'

As for instance. In the year of the Great Exhibition of 1851 there flashed on London a brilliant young man, of distinguished appearance and manner, who announced himself, though not loudly or obtrusively, as Byron's son; with a quantity of his father's correspondence and Shelley's, which he was anxious to edit; and further anxious to rearrange and collate many of the poet's letters which had already appeared, and some which had not. With an engaging air, then, and, be it said, the strongest personal resemblance to his supposititious father, he set about borrowing from the best known collectors such of Byron's letters as he thought would best suit his purpose. These he laboriously copied, sent back the copies, and disposed of the originals for what he could get. Then with the halo of a preface from Mr. Browning he published the Shelley letters from the respectable firm of Moxon, and they by the literary world were accepted as genuine; until—and here was the mistake of the ardent Guiccioli—they fell into the hands of Crofton Croker, who, much struck with a passage they contained, believed he recognised it, and, turning to an old volume of the 'Quarterly Review,' found that there sure enough was the passage, and that he sure enough—Crofton Croker, and not Shelley—was the author of it. The hue and cry was set to work, assisted by the collectors, astonished to find copies of their own Byron letters figuring at sales, but young Childe Harold had flown and was over the blue wave. He came, it is believed, to an end one can scarcely call untimely, as a petty officer in the American Civil War.

To resume. The forger is again, as we have shown, besides the dangers of his paper and ink, sometimes condemned by the watermark; though it is only just to him to say that in this respect as a rule he takes care to be safe. Sometimes he is so rash as to run a date rather fine, as in the case of the Rabelais



letter, when it was observed that the paper bore a mark which very closely corresponded, if it were not identical, with that on a letter of Michael Angelo in the British Museum, dated Rome, 1555, while the Rabelais letter bore date more than twenty years earlier. But it was not so much the watermark—that might have been suffered to pass—as the R of the signature, with too long a tail to it and a general air of *gêne* and the complete want of freedom about the *paraphe*, coupled with the misfortune that he was made to write from Italy when he was known to be at Montpellier, that raised the scoff at the last sale at which it figured, and cut short its career by a solitary and an insulting bid of five-and-twenty shillings.

In conclusion, we offer a few general remarks, observations which have presented themselves to notice during the course of our study of this interesting subject. As to the rarity of famous signatures, Shakespeare's is of course the rarest. There are but six of them known: three to the will, two to conveyances of property, and one in Giovanni Florio's translation of Montaigne of 1603, in the British Museum; of which six, two out of the three on the will are, by some experts, supposed to be written by an amanuensis. To these there may possibly be added one other, of which the Americans claim the discovery, found in a folio edition of the plays, formerly owned by Dr. Ward, vicar of Stratford-on-Avon in 1662. It is, of course, extremely likely that Dr. Ward, who was settled in Stratford within fifty years of Shakespeare's death, should have known several who knew the poet intimately, and from any one of whom he might easily have obtained the signature pasted in his folio. Signatures of Shakespeare are not to us of extreme interest, so long as we have 'Hamlet' and 'King Lear'; but for many they are so, no doubt, and for all they have a financial value; this is a matter for the expert to whom the American discovery is, we believe, to be submitted. The book itself was found out west of the Rocky Mountains, in the Mormon country, and is supposed to have been brought over by the Mormon immigrants of forty years ago. But from 1662 to 1835, we hear nothing of it; is it believed in that interval the signature lay there unregarded, or covered over; to have been considered of no value or interest, to a century too which produced young Master Ireland? Whatever the explanation, it has been secured by Mr. Gunther of Chicago, the best known of American collectors, of mark over here as the purchaser of the original of 'Auld Lang

Syne.' That there is no other signature of Shakespeare's to be hoped for, in this country at any rate, has been made tolerably clear by Mr. Halliwell Phillips, who for the last thirty years has been searching the archives of the kingdom, and has not found even a suggestion of one.

Next to Shakespeare in rarity comes Molière, perhaps before him if numbers are reckoned; for of Molière we believe the only signatures known are, at the most, five; of which one was the other day presented by Dumas to the Comédie Française. Of his plays, no more than of Shakespeare's, no fragment is known to exist. There is, it is true, a legend that somewhere in the heart of France, in an ancient château that escaped the storms of 1793, there is treasured the whole of one of the comedies in manuscript, one that has lain there restfully since its first possessor carried it off from Versailles in 1665. He was, the legend declares, the original of one of Molière's silly marquises, who, retiring from the Court in dudgeon, took with him the play, to wreak his vengeance on it, like a bull on an empty coat. But, on examination, it all appears to be only what is very likely rather than what is true. At least, if it be true, the present owner can prove in no better way that he has not inherited the qualities of his ancestor than by coming forward and letting us have a sight of his heirloom.

To confine ourselves to the celebrities of our own country, the signatures of General Wolfe, of Lord Clive, of Algernon Sidney, of Defoe (whose papers were destroyed while he was standing in the pillory), of George Eliot, of Charlotte Brontë, are among the rarest. Milton's is the rarest of all English literary signatures after Shakespeare. Letters of the queens of Henry VIII. are very scarce; one from Catherine of Arragon has quite recently realised 75*l*. Possibly the king unconsciously followed the advice of Sganarelle in '*L'Ecole des Femmes*,' who in the seventh maxim makes Agnes recite: 'Amongst her furniture, however she dislike it, there must be neither writing desk, ink, paper, nor pens. According to all good rules, everything written in the house should be written by the husband.'

The earliest signatures known are those of laymen of rank in the reign of Richard II., whose sign-manual is itself regarded as the rarest of the English sovereigns. Letters, as we understand them, do not appear till Henry V., and among the first specimens are those well-known of the Paston family, in which 'is given

almost as complete a picture of the condition of the country gentry and aristocracy during the troubles of the Roses as you would gather of the provincial matters of to-day from the correspondence of the rector's or the squire's wife with her relatives in town. Of Sovereigns since Henry VII., Edward VI. and Mary are those most uncommonly met with ; indeed, none of our royal signatures are at all, in the autographic sense, common ; not half so common, for instance, as those of France, where Louis le Grand signed so freely that his autograph is now scarcely worth the paper it is written on. Later, in the early fighting days of the Republic, there were so many *sabres d'honneur* decreed by a grateful country, that Buonaparte, Berthier, and Bassano (who mostly signed them) go for next to nothing. It is curious to note the rarity of comparatively small names and the often abundant stock of those of greater moment. Somerville, for instance, the poet of 'The Chase,' commands a far higher price than Dickens, simply because he wrote fewer letters ; William Blake is valuable not so much for his own sake as because he did not often bring his large and vague mind down to the level of ordinary correspondence ; Leech is scarce, whereas the market has been swamped, since Nugent's sale, with Edmund Kean ; and Cowper has been wholly spoilt, from the dealer's point of view, by the publication of his voluminous correspondence with Hayley. Judges, who are only of contemporary interest (*pace* the Lord Chief Justice), go down, while Keats and Mendelssohn go up. In short, in autographs, as in other matters where human reputations are concerned, there goes forward that ceaseless and general *bouleversement* that time so often chuckles to effect.

Sometimes there are of the same letter two copies in existence, and no man can tell which is genuine of the three ; sometimes there are copies which, though copies, still have an interest of their own ; as, for example, spurious despatches of Parliament and king, sent from head-quarters for deception's sake ; imitations of Charles' hand, containing false news and purported to fall into Cromwell's, and *vice versâ*. There are, moreover, whole copies of correspondence which have been prepared merely for the printer—as in the case of the letters of the author of 'Clarissa'—destined later in their career to cause acute disappointment to the collector who had for years imagined he possessed the Simon Pure. Only a few years back a careful tracing of the famous receipt for 'Paradise Lost' sold for 43*l.* to America—of course, by accident.

Fish in the shallows will make a great splash to regain the river-flow, and humanity in low water will fight desperately to feel once more the tide and current of their former comforts and existence; financial low-water has a balance almost even of great crimes and great virtues—can show well-nigh as long a record of continued effort and continued self-denial as of instant failure and dishonesty. The following does not clearly seem to us to illustrate either one or the other extreme, and so is, perhaps, ‘doubly dear.’ There was, thirty years ago, a young Frenchman who in pathetic terms addressed himself to almost every great name in Europe, humbly requesting the favour of a reply—*bien entendu*. He was, he cried, *un homme fini, décavé*! his life was at its lowest ebb, and before him there lay no prospect but that of mud flats and sterile marshes, mouldering timbers and rotting wickerwork; in a word, such was his position, and such his misery, that he proposed at once to commit suicide. Could the recipient of the letter give him any reason why he should stay his hand, any reason why he should drag out a life so utterly barren, hopeless, useless?

The great names of Europe responded like men—and women; some brief, some long, some persuasive, eloquent, tearful even; some curt, scornful, jesting; but they all answered—that was the point. Espartero wrote: ‘Sir, I do not advise you to kill yourself. Death is a bullet which we must all encounter sooner or later in the battle of life; and it is our part to wait for it patiently.’ Lacordaire wrote at great length, eight or ten pages in his best style, and there were admirable specimens (both for moral and saleable purposes) forthcoming from Montalembert, Antonelli, Fenimore Cooper, Xavier de Maistre, Sophie Gay, Abd-el-Kader, Alexander Humboldt, Taglioni, Heine, Alfred de Vigny, Rachel, Sontag, Dickens, Georges Sand, Emile Souvestre, Jules Lacroix, and many, many others.

Then, like the Casino Gardens suicides of Monaco, who walk off with their pockets full of notes while the gendarmes go for a stretcher—*solvitur ambulando*!—so did the suicide of thirty years ago walk off, with his pockets also full of notes, and they being disposed of for the highest price they would fetch, took a new lease of life, forswore sack, and looked about him for a way to live cleanly. And it was not until an ardent collector discovered that a large portion of his treasures, newly acquired, consisted of arguments against the folly and criminality of suicide,

that the ingenuity of the scheme was as fully appreciated as it deserved.

There are other *saintes larmes* of which we find traces in turning over these portfolios, tears which though not perhaps so sacred are not for that the less bitter; tears of humiliation, almost of despair; tears wrung from proud natures by indifference, by neglect, by want. Often the money such appeals fetch now is far more than the sum appealed for in the letter itself.

Here, for instance, is nine guineas for a letter from Swift, who groans in it over the poverty that follows him. 'If I come to Moor Park,' he writes, 'it must be on foot.' Here is Fielding's complaint of money disappointments, worth 6*l.* 10*s.*; here is Sterne trying to borrow 50*l.*, and poor Goldy writing of his doleful travels and his want of pence, fetching 40*l.* Forty pounds? Why, the very poem sold for only twenty guineas, and here a letter in which he speaks of how much suffering those travels cost him, the auctioneer knocks down for twice the sum! For a few sheets of Burns there is more given to-day than he drew in three years from the excise; and a page of Defoe, on which he writes bitterly of the treatment he had received, goes cheap at eleven guineas.

Is it not pitiful that, to quote the fine image of Swift, Fame so commonly selects the eminence of the tomb, the funeral mound, as a vantage spot to sound her trump from?

*Ut clavis portam, sic pandit epistola pectus*—these proud hearts speaking after death, these sombre voices from their ashes, how much might not have been spared them if the blast had only sounded on the plain, or called to them in the hollows and depressions of their lives?



## COURT ROYAL.

A STORY OF CROSS CURRENTS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'JOHN HERRING,' 'MEHALAH,' ETC.

### CHAPTER XLV.

#### RETRIBUTION.



EXT morning Mr. Cheek was silent at breakfast. Charles was not in his usual lively mood. His father had told him in his room, the night before, of his plan, on their return from the Court. He had told him also that Mr. Worthivale had refused to entertain it. Charles was startled and gratified at the prospect; startled, because he had not dared to wish it, startled also, because he was not sure that he did wish it; gratified, because

he saw open to him the means of taking a place in society that had been hitherto inaccessible. He was silent because, thoughtless though he was, the conjuncture of affairs was one that forced him to think.

Worthivale was nervous and agitated at breakfast. Drops stood on his brow, and he was unable to pour out the coffee, his hand shook so, and he was forced to pass over the duty to Beavis. Something had occurred, more than the proposal of old Cheek, to unnerve him.

After breakfast Mr. Cheek drew the steward aside. 'Well, now,' he said, 'with morning come cool counsels. Shall we deal?'



'How can you speak in such terms?' asked the steward. 'Do you not perceive that it is impossible for the daughter of such an illustrious house to accept— Stuff! as well propose an alliance between an eagle and a crocodile! Preposterous! simply preposterous!'

Mr. Cheek stretched his arms, then drew his finger over his lips. 'There is nothing preposterous in it,' he said. 'Worse matches have been made. One likes apples, t'other likes onions. To my mind, I am the more respectable party of the two. I have lifted myself out of nothing, by my industry, into affluence. They have degraded themselves, by wastefulness, out of wealth into bankruptcy.'

'Will you not help the family, without conditions?'

'Do you take me for a fool? What are they to me?'

'Surely—surely, to obtain their esteem, to deserve the regard of the Duke, the respect of Lord Edward and Lord Ronald, the gratitude of the Marquess—that is something.'

'Not worth a farthing to me,' answered Mr. Cheek, roughly. 'Put it up to auction; who will bid?'

'Besides, you would not be giving your money, only investing it most safely.'

'I have made my proposals,' said the elder Cheek. 'To them I stick as cobbler's wax.'

'I cannot listen to you!' exclaimed the steward. 'You might as well sue for the moon.' He paced the room, swinging his arms; he was hot with indignation.

'I do not want the moon. I want that young woman'—Worthivale shivered—'for my son. She'll make a tidy daughter-in-law. As for those old codgers'—Worthivale's blood curdled (their lordships—*codgers*!)—'they are like turkey-cocks in a barn-yard, ruffling feathers and gobbling at the little fowl. *She's* another sort. Wouldn't give herself high and mighty airs.'

'For Heaven's sake!' cried the steward, putting his hands to his ears, 'have done, or I will leave the room.'

'Needn't go,' said Mr. Cheek. 'I'm off, next coach. Time valuable. Can't afford to waste it like a parcel of gorgeous good-for-naughts.'

'Going!' exclaimed the steward, aghast, and standing still. 'You are not going to-day. To-day is the twenty-third: I invited you to be here when we meet Crudge, the solicitor for Mr. Emmanuel.'

'Can't waste *my* time. Sheer waste. Made my proposal—refused. Enough; I go.'

'But the investment is so good.'

'Know of a score better.'

'But—but you led me to expect——'

'Nothing. Never committed myself. Too old a bird for that.'

Said I would come and look about me. Have done so, taken stock, and made a bid.'

'Which I refuse.'

'It has not been submitted to the proper parties.'

'If by proper parties you mean the Duke and Lady Grace, I absolutely refuse to mention it to them. They—I mean the Duke—would kick me out of the house. She—Lady Grace—I would not dare to look her in the face again.'

'As you like,' said Mr. Cheek, washing his hands in the air. 'Don't take amiss. When dry will brush off. I leave by next coach. One thing, however, I do ask. Allow Charles to remain. Don't want him to be back in Plymouth yet. Understand?'

'Let him stay here, by all means.'

'Right. Hope you'll enjoy yourself with the mortgagees. Cheerful company. Pleasant ways, eh?' If in distress, and you change your mind, wire. Let the young female give her word of honour that she will take my Charlie, and I am ready with my two hundred thousand. She's not one to go from her word. Now—portmanteau.'

'Was there ever such a fool—such a confounded fool,' cried Mr. Worthivale, when Cheek had left the room, as he ran about, holding his head. 'That I should have lived to hear him talk!'

Half an hour later, the great Cheek of the Monokeros was gone, and the hope that had hung on him had fallen and lay broken with many another shattered hope.

'Well!' said the General, entering the dining-room about the hour when the meeting was to take place, 'what says your kinsman to the mortgages? Will he take them?'

'He is a fool, an abject, drivelling fool!' answered the steward. Lord Ronald sighed. He had buoyed himself on the expectation which Worthivale had confided to him, that relief was certain from this quarter.

'That is not the worst,' said Worthivale, in a low tone, and he trembled and became white and moist.

'What now?'

'By this post,' gasped the steward, 'the—the Insurance Company have given notice——'

'My God! not the Loddiswell mortgage for four hundred thousand!'

Worthivale put his hand to his mouth to cover a groan.

Then they heard a carriage drive up to the garden gate, followed by a ring at the bell. A moment after, the maid announced 'Mr. Crudge, solicitor,' and the lawyer entered, followed by Lazarus, dressed respectably.

'Good afternoon, my lord. Good afternoon, Mr. Worthivale,' said Crudge, with freshness and confidence. 'Allow me to introduce Mr. Emmanuel.' He presented Lazarus; the General bowed stiffly, Worthivale shook hands. They seated themselves, Lazarus with his back to the light, in the window, behind Mr. Crudge. Presently the Marquess arrived, with Lord Edward. They bowed to Crudge and Lazarus, and took chairs by the fire, offered them by the steward. With them entered Beavis.

Conversation began on the weather. Crudge talked of the crops—as is correct, to those living in the country—and on land. Lazarus said nothing. So passed ten minutes.

'Let us proceed to business,' said the solicitor, looking at his watch. 'By the way, I bear a note for you, sir, from Messrs. Levi and Moses, who hold the seventeen thousand pound mortgage on Alvington; and also the second, on the same estate, for twenty thousand. I am instructed to act for them. Both must be met in three months from date.'

A silence ensued, broken only by a little, quickly subdued chuckle in the window.

Then Beavis opened proceedings, by stating that the sudden calling up of mortgages at a time when rents had had to be reduced twenty to twenty-five per cent. all round, and when some rents were in arrear for two and three years, at a time, moreover, when land was at an unprecedentedly low value, was very inconvenient to the Duke, and that he desired the mortgagees to reconsider their demand, and allow time for the recovery of the farmers, when, in the event of his not being able to transfer the mortgages, or himself find the amount, land would have to be sold.

The solicitor replied that he was acting both for Mr. Emmanuel and for Messrs. Levi and Moses, and he could say that his clients were not disposed to be harsh, but to accord every

reasonable indulgence. They, however, did not participate in the sanguine view entertained by his Grace. They believed that rents would fall still lower, that the golden day of British agriculture was set, and the whole industry menaced with extinction. Holding this, they were anxious with promptitude to release their money, that they might invest it elsewhere.

‘But, if you proceed to extremities, you will be selling land when it hardly reaches twenty-five years’ purchase.’

‘Better that than sell when it will not fetch twenty years’ purchase. I have heard of desirable properties in North Devon in the market, and not a bid made for them at fifteen.’

‘But this is in South Devon.’

Mr. Crudge shrugged his shoulders.

‘What, then, do you propose, or demand?’ asked the General.

‘We are ready to meet your convenience as far as possible. I am instructed to yield so far as this—half the total at the expiration of three months from date of notice, the rest in two equal portions, at intervals of three months.’

Again a sound like a chuckle from the window. The Marquess looked sharply round, but Lazarus, who sat there, was quiet, his face in shadow and illegible.

‘Small charities!’ said the General. ‘Better the sword *Miséricorde* which ends the torture with a thrust.’

Silence ensued. Lord Edward and the General looked down; the eyes of the Marquess were on the fire.

Lazarus watched them eagerly with malicious delight.

‘You will go no further?’ asked Mr. Worthivale.

‘This is the limit imposed on me by my clients. You will understand, I am but the intermediary; I am obliged to act as directed.’

Worthivale bowed.

Ten minutes of painful silence ensued.

‘I see no necessity for prolonging the meeting,’ said the Marquess, rising.

‘None at all, as far as I am concerned,’ answered the solicitor.

‘Sorry the matter should be ventilated with such freedom in the papers. There was something about it a little while ago, and now the Society papers are still more explicit. There is no mistaking the allusions. If worth while, prosecutions might be begun. Hah!’ said Crudge, ‘I have them in my pocket. Really, these periodicals are offensive and insulting.’

The colour rushed into the General's face. Lord Edward turned pale, and held the jamb of the chimney-piece to prevent himself from falling; a mist formed before his eyes. Lord Saltcombe compressed his lips and clenched his hands. As Crudge offered him the papers with coarse civility, he brushed them aside.

'You want me no further?' he said to Mr. Worthivale.

'No, my lord, there is nothing to be done.'

'Very well; I will consult my uncles at home. I wish you all a good afternoon.'

'A *very* pleasant afternoon to you, my lord,' said Lazarus, also rising, and bowing deeply.

Lord Saltcombe slightly bent his head, and left the room.

Almost immediately after, Lazarus followed; Crudge was detained but a few minutes. When he also was gone, Lord Ronald looked at his brother.

'Hopelessly ruined--that is the plain English,' he said.

'And satyrs dance and scoff over our grave,' said Lord Edward, pointing to the papers.

The Marquess was walking slowly through the park to Court Royal, when he heard rapid steps behind him. He did not turn to see who followed; then he heard a voice.

'Heigh! Lord Saltcombe! Most noble Marquess, a word with you.'

He arrested his walk, and waited patiently till he was caught up, but without turning his head.

A moment after he saw at his side the man Emmanuel, whom he had scarce noticed at the meeting. The man was panting. He had run to catch him up. Lord Saltcombe waited till he had gained breath to speak. He did not know Lazarus. If he had seen him in past years, it had been but briefly and rarely, and he did not recall his features; besides, Lazarus was oldened and altered since then.

'You do not know me, most noble sir!' said the Jew, in a tone between deference and defiance.

Lord Saltcombe contented himself with a slight shake of the head.

'I suppose not. Oh, no! of course not! You do not know who Emmanuel is, who holds his grip on your heart? No, I suppose not!'

Lord Saltcombe became impatient; he turned to continue his walk, without speaking.

‘Do you know who holds two of your mortgages, and who has worked and stirred up the other mortgagees against you? Who has your own—your own bills in his hands?’

Lazarus walked beside the Marquess, peering into his face with an expression full of vindictiveness. Lord Saltcombe looked in front of him; he made no reply, but the veins in his temples swelled and darkened.

‘You do not know, I presume, that I, I hold you all in my power—that you are at my mercy? Do you know who I am?’ asked Lazarus, starting forward and standing in his way.

‘I know that you are an obstruction, and unless you move yourself at once I shall lay my stick across you.’

‘Oh, my Lord Cock-of-the-Walk!’ exclaimed the Jew. ‘What airs we give ourselves!’

Lord Saltcombe’s eyes lightened. He raised his walking-stick, and would have brought it down on Lazarus had not the Jew hastily added: ‘I am Emmanuel Lazarus, of the Barbican, Plymouth!’

Then the stick fell from Lord Saltcombe’s hand. He stood still, and looked keenly at the man before him. The pawnbroker had stooped; his attitude was cringing as he shrank from the menaced blow. His eyes glittered with hate.

Lord Saltcombe drew down his hat and folded his arms. ‘Well,’ he said in a low tone, ‘say what you will, I cannot touch you.’

‘Ah!’ exclaimed Lazarus, ‘you may well stand still and look down when you encounter me—me, the man whose home you broke up, whose honour you stained, whose happiness you blighted. What was I? Only a Jew usurer. What were you? A great noble. Now I am in the ascendant, and you grovel. Now it is my turn to cast you down, and put my foot on your proud neck. I will hold you there, writhe as you may to be free. It was I who spoiled your fine matrimonial schemes with the coffee-planter’s daughter. It was I who warned off old Cheek from coming to your assistance. It was I who put your affairs into the Society papers, and made you the talk of the town. It was I who stirred up the other mortgagees to foreclose. I have waited long till I could find a way to hurt you. Did I say just now you were at my mercy? It was a wrong word. I have no mercy in my heart for such as you, only retribution.’

Then Lord Saltcombe looked him full in the face. He was deadly pale, but he did not move a muscle, nor did his lips quiver.



He spoke with perfect calmness, the calmness of perfect self-control.

‘Mr. Lazarus,’ he said, ‘I would have sought you out years ago, had I thought the interview would lead to good. But though I did not seek you, I have always desired to meet you, that I



might express to you my sorrow, my deepest sorrow, for the wrong I did you. Perhaps it was weakness and want of resolution which hindered my going direct to you. Providence has now brought us face to face, and I hasten to express my contrition. You can say to me nothing that I have not said, and said daily, almost hourly, to myself. You speak of retribution. She—she—’ his

voice vibrated for a moment. 'She has been overtaken by the hand of God, and has suffered where she sinned. I do not hope, I do not wish to escape the chastisement of heaven. Why should I go free, when she has endured the penalty? If it has pleased the Almighty to touch me in the place where most sensitive, in my pride and love for my family—His will be done. My only regret is that I must draw down with me other, and those very dear heads.' He was silent for a moment, with his eyes on the ground. For a moment he needed silence, to recover that command over himself which he felt was slipping from him. Lazarus said nothing. His face was perplexed with contending emotions—hate, surprise, disappointment.

'Mr. Lazarus, take up that stick. It is a sword-cane. I pierced your heart once with the deadliest of thrusts. I will stand here, or anywhere you like, and give you full and free leave to run me through the heart with that needle blade. No one will suspect you. No one will suppose but that I fell by my own hand, unable to endure the humiliation of witnessing the ruin of my house.'

The Jew stooped, picked up the sword-cane, and drew the weapon. It was fine, keen, and sharply pointed. He looked furtively at Lord Saltcombe, who unfolded his arms, and stood before him motionless, beside a tree.

The Jew's fingers tingled as he held the sword. He turned it, and it flickered in the evening light. In the button-hole by the heart of the Marquess was a red rose. The Jew's blood bounded at the thought that with a thrust he could bring forth something redder there than that rose. But he re-sheathed the blade and shook his head.

'That,' said he, 'would be insufficient. It would be too quickly over. Take back your sword-cane. I have not done with you yet.'

'You have refused me a favour, for which I would have thanked you,' said the Marquess, coldly.

'Because I knew it would be a favour,' answered Lazarus venomously, 'therefore I refused it.'

## CHAPTER XLVI.

## E TENEBRIS LUX.

IN the evening the General came into Lord Saltcombe's room. The old man was looking haggard. His grey moustache was not smooth, as usual, but looked like ragged lichen. The spring and strength seemed taken out of him. Lord Saltcombe was pacing the room with arms folded. Lord Ronald put his hand through his nephew's arm and paced the floor with him, without speaking. After several minutes' silence, the General said, 'Your uncle Edward leaves to-morrow. It is of no use his remaining. Even he can do nothing now. If it had been possible, he would have managed it. We have been deceiving ourselves. Disenchantment has come. Herbert, we have been a happy and an united family. We will stand to our arms, and go down in the old ship together, as men. The Duke must know all, and resolve to sell the greater part of the estates. Court Royal itself, if need be.'

'Yes,' answered the Marquess, 'I have foreseen this. As you had hopes, I did not press my view. Now you have come round to my opinion. Loddiswell and Alvington must go. Fowellscombe also. Probably Court Royal. We shall never now be able to maintain the place. Better crawl into a smaller house, and there die.'

'Perhaps Court Royal might be kept during the Duke's life.'

'No,' answered Lord Saltcombe. 'Let us see the worst over. If we live on here we shall be always tempted to keep up the old state.'

'But remember what Worthivale has said about the Bigbury property. It is worth comparatively little now, but if a company were formed, and a town begun there, it might rival Torquay, and be a golden-egg-laying goose to us, and then the family would flourish again.'

'There is no time for forming a company and building a town. If this had been tried three or four years ago we might have been saved; but now it is over. If a fortune is to be found there, it will not be by us.'

'You are right,' sighed the General.

'Beavis,' said the Marquess, 'calculated on saving a portion of our lands. Let us keep Bigbury—it is possible that some day it may "render," as the French say; but more than half our property must go.'

'And dear old Court Royal,' said the General, with a quivering voice.

'Yes, Court Royal must go; or it will drain away what remains in the vain attempt to live up to it. If we do not, what wretchedness to be among abandoned conservatories, neglected grounds, ruinous outhouses, empty stables.'

'Poor Grace!' sighed Lord Ronald.

'Grace has more courage than you, uncle, soldier though you are. Grace will leave her flowers without a sigh, and the pretty rooms that have been her nest without a tear. You will see nothing but smiles on her face, and hear only words of cheer from her lips.'

'Yes—I suppose so,' said Lord Ronald. 'And yet—she will feel the loss more than any of us.'

'She will have Lucy.'

'Of course, Lucy will never leave her, good, faithful girl.'

'Uncle Ronald, you may as well know everything. My notes of hand have all been called up. You know how extravagant I was some years ago, when in the army. Well, the sum, compared with the mortgages, is nothing, but for all that, in our present distress, whence is the money to come from?'

'Pitiful powers,' cried the General, 'troubles are raining on us as fire and brimstone out of heaven! And what have we done to deserve it?' He stood still, put his hand to his forehead, and thrust his fingers through his white hair. 'My head spins. I cannot think.'

'The first thing to be done,' said Lord Saltcombe, 'is for us to collect our plate and finest pictures, and send them to Christie's, and have them sold.'

The General withdrew his hand from his face, and stood staring blankly at his nephew. Then two clear drops ran down his furrowed cheeks. He hastily took out his handkerchief and blew his nose, to disguise what he was ashamed to have seen.

'Yes, uncle—this must be.'

'The Duke will never consent.'

'Then it must be done without his consent.'

'Herbert! not possible.'

The Marquess said no more; he caught his uncle by the arm, and made him continue with him the mechanical walk. He did it to enable the old man to overcome or disguise his emotion.

'I never was sanguine,' said Lord Saltcombe. 'I have felt

that a storm was gathering over our heads, and that no conductors would divert the flashes into innocuous channels. You and the Archdeacon were more hopeful, so was Worthivale, who, of all others, had best reason to know how matters stood. But when Beavis spoke out so plainly, and Unele Edward and you refused to accept his opinion, then I knew that the end was near at hand. For myself, I care nothing. Life has little of interest, and is void of ambitions for me. But if it were possible to do anything to soften the blow to Grace and my father, I would do it. There is, however, nothing—only the sad duty of preparing them for the worst, and that I take upon myself. With Grace it will be easy. With the Duke hard, and I may have to call on you to assist me. The mortgagees have a power of sale, and they will exercise it. What will remain to us out of the wreck, I suppose not even Beavis can tell.'

Late in the evening, Worthivale arrived. He was in such a condition of confused misery that he could not collect his thoughts sufficiently to advise what should be done. He produced his books, but in his bewildered state of mind could make nothing out of them.

'The disgrace!' moaned the General. 'The humiliation to our proud name.'

'You are a soldier,' said Lord Saltcombe.

'There are some things past the endurance even of a soldier,' answered Lord Ronald.

'Where is the Archdeacon?' asked the steward. 'His opinion would be invaluable now.'

'He has gone to bed,' answered the General. 'He is not feeling well. He is much dispirited by the events of to-day. To-morrow he must return to Sleepy Hollow.'

Then the steward and Lord Ronald began to spin cobwebs—cobwebs that needed but the breath of common-sense to blow them away.

Lord Norwich was the brother of the late Duchess. He was getting old and infirm, and he had not been down to visit the Duke lately in Devon. Lord Ronald thought of him. He was wealthy. Why should not he come to the rescue? The Marquess and Grace were his sister's children. Lord Saltcombe reminded them that his son, the Hon. Norfolk Broad, was not likely to consent; he had spent a great deal on the turf, and would probably run through the property when his father died.

Then Worthivale suggested the taking in hand of the oil-shale works. Oil had not been extracted from them before in sufficient quantities to be remunerative, because the wrong sort of crushers had been employed. The Marquess replied that if the crushers squeezed out gold, then it would be worth while getting them, not otherwise.

'Perhaps the Archdeacon will think of something; he is an eminently practical man,' said the General. 'I dare say he has gone to bed early to consider the matter between the sheets, and he will be ripe with a proposal to-morrow.'

Thus sat the three the greater part of the night; the Marquess was the only one who kept his head clear. At three o'clock the steward and Lord Ronald left, and then he flung himself on the sofa, and fell asleep.

That same evening Lady Grace had been in conference with Lucy in her own bedroom, as she prepared to go to rest. She was in a pretty blue dressing-gown, her hair falling about her shoulders loosely. The lady's maid had been dismissed, and Lucy and she were alone together.

'Tell me truly, Lucy. The meeting has led to no good results?'

'No, dear. I hear that half the amount of two of the mortgages must be paid forthwith, and the rest in two instalments within a twelvemonth. But that is not all. Two more mortgages held by Jews are called in, and so—— Worst of all is the terrible one on Loddiswell.'

'And the money is nowhere forthcoming?'

Lucy shook her head.

'Then what will be done?'

'A great deal of the property will be sold.'

'And Court Royal—must that go?'

'Beavis thinks so. Land sells very badly now.'

'I shall not have to part with you, Lucy?'

'No'—and Lucy nestled into her friend's side—'never, never. Oh, my darling!'

'For myself I do not care. If I cannot have my greenhouses and gardens, no one can deprive me of the green lanes and flowery coombs. I can be happy anywhere with you and papa, and Uncle Ronald and my brother. But I do not know how the others will bear it. Dear papa—I fear it will kill him. Uncle Ronald and Saltcombe are looking miserable. Did you observe Uncle Edward



last night? I never saw his face so drawn and colourless. He was very bent and feeble. I asked him what ailed him. He smiled sadly and said, "Only a general break-up." He takes this to heart, and he is not a strong man like the General. I suppose the dreadful truth must be told papa shortly. I must manage to be present so as to soothe him. He will be fearfully excited. If I can but hold his hands I may be of some good in keeping him cool. What is to be done about Mrs. Probus? Dear, good creature, she is bound up with us and cannot live away from us; and I do not think papa would be happy if he thought she were not in the house; she understands his little fancies. Then old Mr. Rowley, the coachman, with his red face. Oh, Lucy! he has been so comfortable here with us, just driving papa out every afternoon. What will become of him? He is too aged to take another situation, and I hear that gentlemen are putting down their carriages everywhere. Then there is Mr. MacCabe, the head-gardener. He has been so civil. I have been afraid of him sometimes. I feared he would scold when I swept the houses of flowers. But he only smiled, though the loss of the cherished blossoms went to his heart, I know. And Jonathan—he has always shown himself so eager to oblige. Lucy! what trouble he took over that rockwork for my Alpine garden, and in piling it up he crushed one of his fingers and lost the nail. And Jane, my maid! I give her so much trouble; I am untidy with my things. There, there—I must cry—but it is not for myself; it is only because we shall have to part with all these nice, kind servants, and because papa will be miserable anywhere else, and Uncle Ronald without plenty of room for his lathe, and Saltcombe without his yacht, and his fishing and shooting. He cares for nothing else, and these will be taken from him. He will have Beavis.'

'Beavis, you may be sure, will cling to him to the last.'

'Yes,' said Lady Grace, and she patted her friend's hand, which she held between her own, and looked thoughtfully before her, 'and your father will always be with mine! Oh, what a blessing it is to have dear, faithful friends! Let everything else go. These precious, golden hearts are above all that the world can give.' After a silence she said reverently, 'And they are God's gift, to comfort us.' Both were affected, and said nothing for several minutes, but Lucy stooped and kissed Lady Grace's hand.

'Lucy,' said the latter after awhile, 'I thought you told me that Mr. Cheek was going to help us.'

'We thought he would, but when it came to the point he drew back, and made ridiculous conditions.'

'Surely he had all but promised, had he not?'

'I cannot say that. My dear father was very sanguine when he returned from town. He told us that he had managed everything beautifully, and that we had no more occasion for anxiety, as our relative, who was a millionaire, would come to the rescue. Dear papa's ducks are all swans, and he is hopeful on the smallest grounds. When Mr. Cheek came here, he did not even go over the estates, he simply came and went again. He did not even attend the meeting.'

'But you say he made some sort of offer.'

Lucy coloured.

'I ought not to have said that. Papa mentioned it to me as a secret. He had not told Beavis, as it would have made Beavis furious—and he might not have been civil to Charles any more.'

'Of course if you are bound not to tell, I will not press you. Otherwise, I would be glad to know the conditions.'

'They were too outrageous to be mentioned,' said Lucy, partly laughing, partly crying. 'It makes me very angry, and yet disposed to laugh, whenever they recur to me.'

'You very angry! you, Lucy! that would be a new experience to me to see my little friend in a passion; and Beavis furious—who looks so gentle and collected.'

'Enough to make us. If you heard, you would be angry also.'

'Tell me, and prove me.'

'I am ashamed. Promise me not to say a word to Lord Saltcombe, or Lord Ronald, or the Duke—not to any one.'

'No—I will not repeat what you tell me.'

'Then you shall hear. That stupid old man, Mr. Cheek, saw how agreeable his son made himself at dinner, and being a blunderhead, he supposed that there was more in his attentions to you than ordinary civility. Well! the dull fellow went home, and told papa he would give two hundred thousand towards clearing the mortgages the day he heard that Charles was accepted by you. Did you ever dream of such audacity? My father had to exercise great self-restraint to keep from knocking the man down. Some minds are not properly balanced.'

The blood rushed through Lady Grace's veins, crimsoning her pure face and neck and bosom. Next moment she was as white as a snowdrop.

'I must not keep you up any later, Lucy,' she said. 'It is time for both of us to go to bed.'

Lucy looked at her friend with surprise. Not an allusion to what had been said passed her lips. Lucy noticed her paleness, and misinterpreted it. 'I have offended you, by telling you of this piece of vulgar presumption. Let the remembrance of it die. I am sorry that I allowed myself to blab the impertinent secret.'

'Not at all,' answered Lady Grace. 'I thank you for telling me. Kiss me, and go to bed. I want to be alone.'

Next morning early, Lady Grace entered her brother's room. He was still asleep on the sofa. The shutters were shut, and the curtains drawn. The servants had looked in, but had not liked to disturb him.

His sister partially opened one of the shutters, so that a ray of light entered. Then she drew a chair beside the sofa, and sat down by her brother's head.

Presently he woke. Her gentle, pitiful, loving eyes, resting on his worn face, had disturbed him. He looked round and sat up.

'Grace!' he said, and brushed his hands over his brow to collect his senses.

'Yes, dear, I am here.'

'I thought I was visited by an angel.'

She was in a light print morning gown, her face was pale, and in the dimness of the room might well have been thus mistaken.

'Uncle Ronald, Worthivale, and I have been keeping up quite a revel,' he said.

She looked round; there were no glasses on the table, but plenty of papers scribbled over with calculations.

'This looks sadly dissipated,' he said; 'I am sorry you see me and my room in such a condition, Grace.'

'Oh, Herbert! do not think to deceive me. I know well what it means. All hope gone. Everything lost. Is it not so?'

He did not answer.

'Yes, brother, I know the worst, and I am glad that I do. I have not slept at all. I was sure you and the dear uncles were restless through trouble. I have come to you thus early to set your mind at ease. The house need not be sold, the servants need not receive notice. All is not lost. *E tenebris lux.*'

'I see no light.'

‘It is coming.’

‘Who will bring it?’

‘I dare say I shall.’

‘You, dear sister!’ said Lord Saltcombe with a laugh. ‘Do you remember the little snipe that supposed it could stay up the heavens with its feet, when the thunder rolled, and it thought they were falling? It said “I, even I, will uphold the skies.”’

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## CHAPTER XLVII.

### LEIGH.

THE Archdeacon left without giving advice. He had no advice that he could give. He looked ill. When Micah had his idols stolen by thievish men of Dan, he beat his breast, and tore his beard, and cried, ‘Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and what have I more?’ The belief in his family stability had been the deepest fibre in his soul, and now that conviction was torn up his mind was in collapse. He had regarded himself as able to assist in every emergency, if not with money, yet with counsel, and now he found himself powerless to avert the impending ruin either with money or with counsel.

The General wrote letters all day, which he tore up and rewrote. He looked greyer and older than before, and was silent at meals. Lord Saltcombe placed no reliance on his sister’s promise of relief. Whence could it come? He knew of no quarter. She had given him no reason for encouragement. He attributed her hopes to a natural disposition to look for the best. He deferred breaking the news to the Duke, from his habitual procrastination, of putting off doing what was unpleasant.

Charles Cheek was still at the Lodge. He could not disobey his father, who had insisted on his remaining there, but he was getting mortally weary of the life. Lady Grace exercised over him the same spell, but the country life, the want of daily variety, the lack of genial companions of his own age, made him wish himself back in Plymouth. He had no resources in himself, and a man without such resources is only happy in a crowd.

‘Beavis, old boy,’ he said one day, ‘I shall give a dinner at the “Duke’s Head,” and break this frightful monotony. Young Sheepwash and I play at billiards when we do not hunt, and there are one or two other fellows at the club, who are not bad, but

stupefied by living out of the world. I feel like a comet getting further and further into outer space. This Kingsbridge is one of life's backwaters where only sticks assemble. I shall give a dinner. I'll ask the Vicar's son. He is a good fellow enough. His father wants him to go into the Church, because the Duke can dispose of some livings, but he wants to go on the stage, which is absurd; he has no looks and no memory. Can I invite Saltcombe?'

'You can call him, but will he come? I think not; he is much engaged over unpleasant business, which has put him out of tune.'

'Out of tune! I should think so; there is no tune in him at all.'

'You must excuse him. He has heavy anxieties.'

'I know that—about money. That is no excuse for moping. I am always in trouble about money, but it never spoils my pitch. Beavis! you have not heard of my last escapade, and how I got out of it. I lost a hundred pounds on a snail to Captain Finch. I hadn't a hundred pence in my pocket, and he was under orders for India. A girl got me out of my hobble. Little monkey! It fills me with laughter whenever I think of her. Beavis! His Grace the Duke of Kingsbridge could not do better than cross the palm of that little witch with silver. She'll help him, if help be possible.'

'How did you—or she manage it?'

'She is a queer piece of goods, very respectable. Not a word against her character. I have had many a joke with her now and then. Well!—will you believe me—she appealed to my father, and threatened breach of promise.'

'Had you given her occasion? Did you like her?'

'Like her! Couldn't help liking her. Such a rogue! Enough to make one laugh all day. You never knew where to have her. Well, my father was in a tearing rage, and went down to Plymouth to see her, and bought her off with a hundred pounds.'

'What has that to do with your debt?'

'Everything. She enclosed the note by next post, with my compliments, to Captain Finch, who was surprised and delighted to get the money so expeditiously.'

'She kept none of the money?'

'Not a farthing.'

'Is she well off?'

'Has not a sixpence.'

'Why did she do this?'

'To help me. Because I christened my snail after her. I

wish I could go to Plymouth, and see her again to thank her. It seems shabby not to do so, don't it ?'

'Your father was quite right in insisting that you should stay here.'

'I cannot stand it much longer, Beavis. The country was not created for me. Glad I wasn't born in prehistoric periods before towns were. Your father is most kind and good to receive me, and the people at the Court are very hospitable, but I get tired of the same faces, same scenes, same subjects of conversation, day after day. I do not know how I should live without the club and the billiard-table.'

'You enjoy your walks with the ladies.'

'I get a certain distance with Lady Grace, but no further.'

'Pray how much further do you want to go? Pretty well for you to be received into such a house with courtesy.'

'Oh, don't you know? My father and I have settled that she is to become Mrs. Charles—I mean, Lady Grace Cheek.'

'What an honour!' exclaimed Beavis, sarcastically. 'Pray, are the Duke and the lady informed of your intentions?'

'No, I have not had sufficient encouragement.'

'Then let me advise you to refrain from communicating the flattering proposal to either, till you *have* received the requisite encouragement.'

'Of course, of course,' said the unabashed Charles. 'My governor is set on it. I should like it well enough. When I am with her, I am over head and ears; when I am away, I am not so sure that she will suit me.'

'Have done!' exclaimed Beavis. 'This is intolerable.'

'Did you ever hear the story of the North Country collier and his son, who were breeding a dog for fighting? The son went under the table and barked, and the dog flew at him and bit his nose, and held on as a stoat to a rabbit. The lad screamed to his father to call off the dog; but the old fellow said, "Let him bite, lad, let him bite, it'll be the making o' the pup." I think my governor is urging me on in this affair for the same reason. "It'll be the making of the pup," he says.'

Beavis' face flushed. He turned his back and walked away. Charles Cheek ran after him. 'There, old fellow, don't take amiss what I have said; it is only a joke.'

'Then joke on some other subject. Lady Grace Eveleigh is sacred.'



'By all means,' said young Cheek, 'we'll change the topic. Are you going to the Plymouth ball?'

'No, I think not.'

'Nor Lord Saltcombe, nor her ladyship?'

'They never attend.'

'Well!—I am off to the Court. We have planned a walk to-day to Leigh Priory, which they say is pretty; and we shall pick primroses and wood anemones on the way. Will you come?'

'No, I have business.'

'Then there will be only three of us—tricolor. Lady Grace, Cousin Lucy, and myself. Saltcombe has something to detain him.'

Beavis nodded. He was ruffled by what Charles had said, and the swell in his temper would not allay itself at once. Charles walked through the park and joined the ladies.

Leigh is an old priory converted into a farmhouse; it is almost as left by the monks when expelled three hundred years ago, with scarce an alteration save the destruction of the church. It stands in a wooded valley, with rich green meadows occupying the bottom. A sweet, sheltered nook, basking in the sun—a place in which to dream life away.

The walk was pleasant, the air soft, the sun bright, the buds of the honeysuckle had burst into leaf, an occasional white butterfly flickered in the way. The woods were speckled with starry wind-flowers, and the hedges full of yellow primrose. Here and there the blue periwinkle was spread as a mat. It had escaped originally from the priory garden, as had the snowdrops, and had become wild, like the virtues—simple virtues—of the old monks, which lingered on in the congenial soil of the simple rustic souls of that part of Devon.

'I wonder whether there is truth in Sir Henry Spelman's doctrine that Church property carries with it a curse that consumes the lay impropiators,' said Lady Grace, partly to Lucy, partly to herself. 'Leigh has belonged to the Eveleighs since the dissolution.'

'No, Lady Grace,' answered Charles; 'the cause of decay is generally to be found nearer at hand than in a theft of three centuries.'

'Yes,' she answered, with a sad smile, 'no doubt you are right. We throw back the blame on our remote forefathers, that we may shut our eyes to our own faults. We Eveleighs have but our own

improvidence to look to as the cause of our fall. We have not taken warning in time. We let occasion slip, till occasion came no more.'

'There is no immediate anxiety, I hope,' said the young man.

'Yes, before the year is out, our doom will be sealed, our ruin published to the whole world.'

Lucy looked at her friend with surprise. Hitherto she had not spoken on this subject to a stranger, and now she was court-ing conversation thereon.

'Let us hope for the best,' said Charles.

'It is of no avail hoping. We have cast out the anchor, and there is no bottom in which it will bite. A fig-tree in our garden has been failing for some years. Last autumn I pointed it out to old Jonathan. "Please, my lady," he said, "the fig is going home." This spring the wood is dead, and Jonathan is stubbing up the roots. "He's gone home, as I said," was his remark. Well! the old tree of Eveleigh is also going home, and next year we shall be stubbed up out of Court Royal, and gone home altogether.'

Young Cheek did not relish a dismal subject. He tried to brighten the conversation by changing the topic.

'Do you ever go to the Plymouth balls? They are select and good.'

'I have not been for some years. At one time, but not since Saltcombe has not cared to attend.'

'Won't you come to the next, at Easter?'

Lady Grace paused, looked down, and said, 'If you wish it.'

Lucy started, glanced at her timidly, and coloured. Even Charles was surprised. He said quickly, 'Wish it! It will crown the ball with perfection. Oh! Lady Grace, how delightful! Then Lucy also will come, and, no doubt, Lord Saltcombe also. That will be charming indeed! How pleased the Plymouth people will be!'

Charles Cheek found a bank of blue borage and pink crane's-bill, and some golden celandine—the two former had lingered through the mild winter, untouched by frost. He made two little bouquets, and presented one to each of the ladies. On their way home the conversation reverted to the family troubles. Lucy was puzzled. She did not say much; she left the other two to talk. Her mind was engaged wondering at her friend's manner, which seemed changed.

'I wish—oh! how I wish,' said Lady Grace, 'that there were some means by which our ruin might be averted. I would do much—I would do anything that lay in my own power—to save my dear father the sorrow, and to give my brother a chance



of beginning life again, uncrushed by the consciousness of the impending Götterdämmerung. The knowledge of what was coming has blighted his life, once so bright with promise.'

Charles looked intently in her face.

'Do you really mean this, Lady Grace?'

‘What I say, I mean,’ she answered, with a slight tremor in her voice.

Lucy, frightened, looked at her, and saw two fiery spots in her cheeks.

‘I have no pride. If it lay with me, I would sacrifice myself, were my sacrifice worth anything to any one.’

‘Lady Grace!’

No more was said. They were in the park. They saw Lord Ronald walking towards them, without his hat, his white hair raised by the wind. He was looking excited.

‘I want you, Grace. There is a telegram—from Edward. No, I do not mean that—about your Uncle Edward. A telegram from Glastonbury, from Elizabeth; come in. Saltcombe and I must be off immediately. The carriage is being got ready without delay. We must catch the 7.40 up train. That, however, sticks at Exeter, and we shall have to waste over an hour of precious time on the platform. It cannot be helped, though the Duke urges our telegraphing for a special.’

‘What is it?—Oh, uncle!’ exclaimed Lady Grace, with fluttering heart, ‘tell me the worst—is he——?’

‘No, not that,’ answered Lord Ronald hastily, but he turned his head aside and wiped his eyes; ‘whilst there is life there is hope. A seizure. How severe, the telegram, that is, Elizabeth, does not say. Saltcombe and I are requested to hurry to Sleepy Hollow. The wording is short. Elizabeth might have been fuller. We have not told the Duke all; only that we are wanted, and that—that Edward is unwell. That has made him uneasy. You must go to him, and pacify him, and in an hour or so show him the telegram. I am afraid, Grace, that this is a serious case. How blows do fall one after another! and Edward the one man of the family on whom one leaned! My God! if we lose him, what shall—what shall we do?’

As Charles parted with them at the door, Lady Grace said to him, in a sad, plaintive voice, ‘I am sorry I cannot keep my promise. You see the reason. I cannot attend the ball.’

That evening, in her room, Lucy said to her, ‘Oh, Grace! what am I to understand? You gave Mr. Cheek such encouragement! After that—he will be daring to ask for your hand.’

‘If he does I will give it him.’

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

## THE FALL OF A PILLAR.

LORD RONALD and the Marquess reached Bridgewater at midnight. There they engaged a fly, and drove across country to Sleepy Hollow. The drive was long. There was no train so late from Highbridge to Glastonbury, consequently they had no choice. When they drew up at the rectory door the hour was early in the morning, and the first streaks of dawn appeared. A light was in an upper window.

Lady Elizabeth appeared. She had expected them, and sat up; she was calm and collected. Lord Edward was no more. He had not recovered from his stroke. The archdeaconry of Wellington, a canonry in Glastonbury, and the rectory of Sleepy Hollow, were open for eager applicants.

A bright fire was burning in the study, and the table was laid near it. The cook was up, and a smell of mutton-chops pervaded the house.

'Will you have some hot wine and water, or stout?' asked Lady Elizabeth. 'Dear old man. He seemed to know me. I held his hand, and he pressed it when I spoke to him. There is Worcester sauce, if you like it. He seemed very unlike himself when he returned from Court Royal. I am afraid he over-exerted his brain. I know you all thought him very clever. I always considered him very *good*. There is cold rabbit pie, if you prefer it; but I have no doubt you are chilly, and would like what is hot. At this hour there is no choice—chops and mashed potatoes, or cold meat. There was a worry, moreover, about repairs. Nothing has been done to the house for some time—in fact, we have not had the money to execute necessary repairs. Now we shall have a terrible bill for dilapidations. Edward got a builder to go over the roof with him, because the rain came in. I think he caught a chill, and being below par he succumbed. He was a very good man, and so dear to me!' Lady Elizabeth began to cry. 'I know the chops are tender,' she said, after having wiped her eyes. 'One of our own sheep—we killed on Monday. I do not know why it is that when we buy mutton we give tenpence to tenpence-halfpenny, and when we sell we get only sixpence. We could not eat all the sheep ourselves, so what we did not want was sold to our workmen and parishioners. Edward let them

have it at sixpence. He was so kind—so over-kind. He was easily imposed upon. He did not sufficiently consider himself.' Presently, after another suffusion of tears, 'You must eat. There is ground rice in a shape, and strawberry jam. I know you are unhappy. You loved Edward. So did I; but we are human, and must care for our bodies. Eat, eat, Ronald. Finish that bottle; you shall have another uncorked in a minute. That insufferable curate of ours has mounted the blue ribbon. The last word I heard him murmur was "Ichabod;" that means "The glory is departed." I am alluding to Edward, not the curate. I thought he wanted to leave me a message. His lips moved, though his eyes were closed, so I leaned over him and said, "Yes, Edward, dear, what is it?" Then he sighed heavily, and pressed my hand, and opened his eyes, and said, "Ichabod!" I believe after that he had not a conscious moment. Never mind, Ronald, the gravy has not gone through.' This referred to a spill of the juice from the chops on the tablecloth. The General's hand had trembled as he helped himself to the gravy. 'I think you had better not see him to-night. He looks so sweet and peaceful, as if he were twenty years younger. Dear, dear fellow! What shall I do without him? You had better lie down; do go to bed for a few hours. You shall not be disturbed; you have had a long and harassing journey, and you, Ronald, at your time of life, cannot bear these strains like the young. Now, of course, nothing can be done. If he had lived till your arrival it would have been different. Your beds are aired, have no fear; and there are fires in your rooms.'

Lord Ronald and the Marquess remained till after the funeral. The funeral was conducted with some state; Lord Edward was an Archdeacon, Canon of the Cathedral of Glastonbury, and last, but not least, son of a Duke. All the principal clergy and gentry of the neighbourhood attended, and the parishioners showed and wept, the women especially. Would the next rector let them have his mutton at sixpence?

The Hon. Cadogan Square, brother of Lady Elizabeth, was there. The Squares were a great legal family, the head of which had been created a peer.

When the Archdeacon's will was read, it was found that he left all his personalty to his wife, five hundred pounds to the Cathedral of Glastonbury, five hundred to the widows and orphans of the diocese, four hundred to the County Hospital, one hundred to the



S.P.G., and one hundred to the C.M.S. All the rest of his property was to go to his niece Grace. But when his affairs were looked into, it was further discovered that his real property had been got rid of, sunk in the great Kingsbridge vortex in loan upon loan. Further, it was discovered that dilapidations on the rectory, and the chancel, and some cottages on the glebe, would amount to a thousand pounds, which the widow would be called upon by that horse-leech Queen Anne to pay.

It was further discovered that Lord Edward was several hundred pounds in arrear to the Glastonbury Bank. Also, that the butcher's bill (mutton never below tenpence) for the last eighteen months was unpaid, and amounted to one hundred and forty pounds four shillings and five pence three farthings. The grocer's bill for the last two years had been a running account, with running discharges of a few pounds at random; the wine merchant's had not been attempted to be paid except by fresh orders. Lord Ronald was executor. It cost him fifty pounds to prove a will which left nothing to anybody but debts. The Madras Railway bonds had been sold a week before the death of the Archdeacon, and what had become of the money nobody knew. No money was found in the house, except thirteen shillings and sixpence, the proceeds of the sale of part of the sheep to parishioners, at sixpence per pound.

Lord Ronald was obliged to write to the Duke to entreat him to send him some money to cover immediate expenses. This the Duke was fortunately able to do out of the proceeds of the Madras Railway bonds, which had gone to him, and he had given the Archdeacon a note of hand for the amount, which somehow could not be found.

Most fortunately the club accounts, and the church accounts, were in perfect order, as were those of the diocesan societies of which the Archdeacon was treasurer. This was only so because these were managed by Lady Elizabeth, who kept all the money received in green baize bags, properly labelled, in a locked cupboard, suspended to pegs, like Bluebeard's wives. The curate, however, had not received his salary for the last half-year. The servants had all been paid recently. Lady Elizabeth discharged their wages out of her private purse. Unfortunately for the curate, she did not pay his. As soon as he was able to get away, Lord Ronald returned to Court Royal. He had been very warmly attached to his brother Edward, whom he had revered as a

pillar of orthodoxy—a pillar he was, like that of Pompey, supporting Nothing—and an ultimate appeal in all matters of difficulty relating to the farms. Lord Ronald was a man with a very gentle, tender heart, and Edward had been associated with his happy boyish days. They had been at school together; they had been companions in the holidays together. In after life, Ronald had always made of his brother Edward his closest friend and confidant, and adviser. Consequently the death of the Archdeacon shook the old man profoundly. The troubles and difficulties involved in his executorship bewildered and depressed him.

The Duke was shocked to see how altered he was when he returned to Court Royal. He lost his memory now and then, and seemed dazed, and had to hold his hand to his head to recollect himself. His face was more lined, his hair whiter, it looked thinner; he was less carefully dressed, and his hands shook. His back was bent, and his tread had lost its firmness.

The Duke clasped his brother's hand. 'You have felt the loss of Edward severely, Ronald. So have I. Dear, good, loving soul, full of honour and charity! And what a brain! clear, sound, well balanced. He ought to have been a bishop. Well! the world of this nineteenth century was not worthy of him. There is one great and good man the less, the like of whom will not be met with again.'

After a pause he continued: 'I do not know what we are coming to. The spirit of the age has affected our excellent Worthivale. He demurred to my putting all the servants in mourning. He said the expense would be so great, as all the men must have new black liveries, and the women each a pair of black gowns and a bonnet apiece. I overrode his objections. I have no patience with this peddling spirit of retrenchment, whether in the affairs of the nation or of this house. It would be a scandal not to go into mourning for Lord Edward. The expense is unavoidable. I presume he has left a handsome sum behind him. I think you told me in your letter that he had left everything, except a few trifles in charity, to Grace. As for Elizabeth, she is provided for by her marriage settlement.'

'I am afraid Grace's chance of getting anything is very small,' said the General; 'and we shall be hard put to, to find money for the charities. I don't quite know what is to be done about the debts—is Elizabeth to pay them? They are heavy. As for the charities, they amount to sixteen hundred pounds, and this we

must find; if we do not find it voluntarily, the Dean and Chapter, and the officers of the Widows and Orphans, and Propagation of Heathens, and Church Missionary can force us. It would be a scandal——'

'My dear Ronald, everything shall be paid at once. I will see Worthivale to-day.'

'Let Saltcombe and me settle that,' said the General. 'Do not concern yourself further in this matter. I do not know whether Saltcombe has spoken to you about the mortgages on Court Royal and Kingsbridge. They have to be met very speedily. Indeed, time is flying, and the money must be raised. I have been thinking—what do you say, Duke, to the sale of Kingsbridge House? It is of no manner of use to you now?'

'Good heavens!' the Duke rose in his chair. 'Do I hear you aright? The sale of Kingsbridge House? Your wits are leaving you, Ronald. How can we sell that? We must have a town house. Why, Saltcombe will be marrying—he may be Duke shortly, and then he must spend the season in London. No; not another word of that. The Duke without a town residence! like a foreign yellow-backed book, published without a cover!'

'We cannot make bricks without straw,' murmured the General.

'How, bricks without straw?' asked the Duke, testily.

'We are in a condition in which we do not know where to look for money, and yet we have to pay Edward's bequests, some at least of his debts, and the mortgages on the very heart of the property.'

'Worthivale will manage it.'

'Worthivale cannot work miracles. The Alvington mortgages are also called in, and the Loddiswell threatened.'

'Send Saltcombe to me. We will arrange for a fresh mortgage, or get these transferred. They have been transferred already—at least some of them.'

'But more money must be found, and a transfer is not easy in these unsettled times. The property is burdened beyond what it can bear in prosperous times.'

The Duke bit his lips and frowned. 'We have managed very well hitherto, and we shall manage in the future.'

'We have managed in the way of the ostrich—the family crest, and not an inappropriate one—by putting our heads into

a bush, and thinking, because we see no danger, that none menaces.'

'Really, Ronald, your anxiety as executor to Edward's will has ruffled your temper.'

'Not a bit. Something must be done, and I do not know what to do, now Edward is gone. I expected Saltcombe to have told you all—he undertook to do so. As he has failed, I must. Emmanuel's mortgages must be paid at once—those of Moses and Levi within three months—bills have been called in, which we must meet. Here are our debts to Edward, which must be cancelled within a twelvemonth, and the charitable societies satisfied. It will never do for them to say that the poor and the heathen have been cheated of a few pounds by the noble house of Kingsbridge. Then there is the Loddiswell mortgage—and others that are sure to come.'

'These things right themselves,' said the Duke. "*Tout vient à qui sait attendre.*" Let Saltcombe take those troubles off your mind.'

'Saltcombe is prepared to sell.'

'To that I will never consent.'

'If you will not sell voluntarily, the mortgagees will sell from under your feet.'

'Nonsense. Worthivale will satisfy them all without their coming to extremities; besides, if it did come to that—well—rather be robbed than voluntarily alienate the patrimony of our ancestors.'

'Look here, Duke. Let us sell those Rubens at Kingsbridge House. Some of them are scarcely decent—fat nude females and satyrs tumbling amid goats, and peaches, and grapes, and cherubs, and red and blue drapery, which is everywhere except where it ought to be. One of them, you know, is covered with a curtain. Of what good to us are these pictures? Let them be sold. They are worth a great deal of money, and we should be thankful to be rid of such voluptuous nightmares.'

'They were presented to the Field-Marshal by the grateful City of Antwerp. They are heirlooms. They have a history. They have been engraved. We cannot part with them.'

'There is a quantity of old plate here—I should say tons of it, which is never used. Why should not that be sold?'

'For the best possible reason, that each piece has a history. Some were presented for services rendered, others are works of

high art, some came to us through distinguished marriages. No, the plate cannot be parted with.'

'Then the books. There are perches of volumes in the library no one ever looks into, some, doubtless, valuable; possibly some unique. Let us have down a London bookseller to value them, and, if need be, purchase them. Which of us cares for old books now?'

'They are all bound and impressed with our arms on the covers, or have our bookplates inside. I cannot endure the thought of them finding their way into the libraries of common Dicks and Harries. No—the books must not be sold.'

'There is the family jewelry. There are magnificent sets of diamonds and other stones, never worn. Let them be disposed of.'

'Not on any account. Saltcombe may marry, and his wife will need our jewelry. You would not have a Duchess of Kingsbridge without her diamonds?'

'I give it up,' said the General, distractedly, with his hand to his head.

'My dear Ronald,' said the Duke, 'if we are to go down, which I will not for one moment admit, let us sink like Rienzi and his sister in the last scene of the opera, amid falling pillars of Church and State, of the moral and social order. I see on all sides threatenings of the dissolution of the bases of society. It may be that we, in England, will go through throes like those of the Revolution in France. It looks like it. All that we honour and hold sacred is menaced. There is no security anywhere. In the general social upheaval and constitutional overthrow, we may be crushed, but do not let us contribute to our own fall.'

'I want to avert it,' exclaimed the General.

'Listen to me. I must trouble you not to interrupt me. There is one thing of which, if we be true to ourselves, we can never be despoiled—our dignity. Let us maintain that. Let us combat the powers of evil—I mean the democracy——'

'But this is not a case of democracy at all, but of debt,' interrupted the General.

'You are again snapping the thread of my argument,' said the Duke, offended; 'and now I don't know where I was, it has shrunk out of reach like a ruptured tendon. Do not let us cast away what is ours, as sops to Cerberus, to facilitate an Avernian descent.'

'What about the charitable bequests? The honour of the family is at stake.'

'Where the honour of the family is menaced, it must be maintained at all cost. "L'honneur avant la vie." But I can see no dignity in the lizard, which when pursued slips joint after joint of his tail, and is content if he lives, a maimed and despicable trunk.'

Lord Ronald was trifling with a bronze lizard paper-weight on the table as the Duke spoke, and his Grace's eyes were on it. 'There is something to me unspeakably contemptible in attempting to conciliate the masses by dropping privilege after privilege, and selling estate after estate to satisfy Jewish moneylenders—it is all the same.' He paused, still looking at the lizard. 'I do not see how it is possible that Edward can have left so little. He had a good income from several quarters, and Elizabeth was not penniless.'

'He has left nothing but debts.'

'What sort of debts?'

'Butcher's bill, grocer, shoemaker, clerical tailor, fruiterer—I cannot tell you all. There is quite a commotion among the shopkeepers of Glastonbury; they think they will be done out of their money.'

The Duke reddened. 'Done out of their money! Nonsense, Ronald! With me to fall back on? Write to them at once, I make myself solely responsible for all my brother's debts. Every man shall be paid, and paid promptly.'

Lord Ronald still stood playing with the bronze lizard.

'Well!' said the Duke, looking up, 'that settles everything, I trust.'

'But whence is the money to come?'

'My dear fellow, I cannot attend to such trifles. Worthivale will manage that. Let him have the figures.'

'And the charities?'

'All shall be paid—to the fraction of a penny.'

'But how?'

'That is not your affair. It can be done, of course. I pledge myself to pay.'

The General sighed. 'Oh, Edward! Edward!' he moaned, as he walked away more dispirited than when he entered the room. 'Only your genius could now disperse the cloud of difficulties And you are gone. One pillar is fallen, and the whole building will go to pieces.'

*(To be continued.)*

## THE SCENIC WORLD.

FEW subjects are so agreeable, so interesting, as that of the stage; which, for young and old, for pleasure-seekers and students alike, has ever had a sort of fascination. In childhood our first play is one of the most exquisite sensations, when, as Charles Lamb says, the glittering scenery seemed to be made of 'glorified sugarcandy,' and the solemn folds of the green curtain to part us from regions of celestial delight. In his day, however, the marvels of modern scenery were not; and fifty years ago, scenery decorations and properties were all of the rudest kind. Few can conceive what ingenuity, ability, daring, and even genius is displayed in the wonderful 'world behind the scenes,' and it is proposed to give an explanation of the simple spells and methods with which the necromancers of the theatre work their miracles.

Much of the extraordinary change that has taken place within twenty years is owing to the resources of science being applied to the stage. This is illustrated by the progress made in *lighting*. What with the blaze of footlights, the lights at the sides and at the top, the performers seem to move almost in a ring of fire—to say nothing of that glowing furnace, the Sun-light, which fiercely illuminates the audience. Nay, the actress of note must have a special light of her own; and we see the leading lady pursued across the stage by the dazzling blaze of the limelight. It is difficult to conceive the contrast to all this in Garrick's day, when the stage was lit, not by footlights, but by four large chandeliers, which hung over the heads of the players. This was a rational system, for the faces were effectively lit up, and the scenery left dim and indistinct. But then these were the old foolish times when nobody cared for scenery, but for the play only and the actors. Then any stuff would do for dresses—the coarsest was most effective—for there was but little light to see the texture. In Macready's dress in 'Virginus,' now in Mr. Irving's possession, the armour was of pasteboard covered with tinfoil, and the dagger of wood. There was a scarf of red serge, a linen tunic and sandals, &c. The whole could not have cost a couple of pounds. But a rich dress would have been wasted, and now the searching rays would display the poverty of material. Hence the introduction of rich and



costly stuffs which makes the actress's bill for dress now as high as that of a lady of fashion in the season. Hence those superb plushes and velvets of many tints, the brocades, the rare ornaments. In the pantomimes we see whole bands of young ladies with their helmets, shields, and breastplates—no longer of pasteboard—made of a brilliantly polished silvery metal which reflects the bright rays of the limelight. This metal is costly enough, and these suits of armour cost a good deal. Stage jewellery now is a regular manufacture, and though many actresses wear real diamonds, it need not be said that the mimic stones are more effective. Sham furniture looks more like furniture on the stage than the finest that could be ordered from Maple's. It would take too long to expound this, but in illustration it may be said that at the Théâtre Français there is a property clock for a boudoir elegantly painted and made of papier-maché, and which cost five or six hundred francs.

Formerly every theatre had its own wardrobe and stock dresses which were classified. Thus there were suits of Roman dresses, which served for every Roman play, like 'Julius Cæsar,' 'Virginius,' and the like; old English comedies had their regulation costume—court dresses, bob wigs, &c. This stock was regularly renewed by the cast-off laced suits of noblemen and gentlemen, which were either given as presents or purchased. In Garrick's day there was no trouble taken about costumes, except to have them handsome. In the Garrick Club there is a picture from 'Macbeth' where Garrick is shown in a handsome laced coat, scarlet waistcoat, knee breeches, and bob wig. In 'Othello' he wore an uniform of an English officer. This seems absurd enough, but it is really of less concern than one would think. For in these sumptuous dresses the players seem almost to be less the characters of the play than when in their ordinary dresses. Terriss and Irving seem much more like Terriss and Irving in the clothes of a Venetian senator of three hundred years ago than they would be in clothes of a more modern kind.

Nowadays there are regular costumiers, and when a new play is brought out a contract is made with the person who makes and hires out the dresses at a fixed charge, and takes them back at the close of the season. They are then hired again to inferior theatres in town or country. This system is particularly adopted in the case of pantomimes, when some hundreds of dresses are required, which it would be quite too costly a business to buy

outright for only a few weeks' use. At the end of the season they are purchased, with the pantomime itself, scenery and properties, for some provincial theatre. They thus return again and again to the costumier's store, and can be finally used for fancy balls, private theatricals, &c.

No one has done so much for stage costume as Mr. Henry Irving. The dresses in his grand Italian revivals might have been worn by the Venetian nobles and dames of the era represented, so rich and sumptuous are they. He always chooses the most costly stuffs, even for secondary performers, on the principle that they are the cheapest in the end. Rich plushes, cut velvets, satins, silks are used in profusion, the plushes often costing a guinea a yard. His own dresses, one for each of his favourite characters, would fill a room. This popular actor has the highest idea of the dignity of the profession: his swords, collars, &c., are all of intrinsic value. The gold chain he wears in 'Hamlet' was the gift of an admirer among the audience, who begged as a favour to substitute it for the one he was in the habit of wearing. Miss Terry's Venetian dresses are of the finest make and material; and those who witnessed 'The Merchant of Venice' will recall the splendid robe of amber brocaded silk with its innumerable yards of sweeping train, the value of which fair readers will estimate better than I can. These dresses are regularly designed by competent artists: and it is interesting to see a series of pretty water-colour sketches, one for each character, minutely and carefully coloured. Grevin, in Paris, is at the head of this department, while here, the Hon. Lewis Wingfield and Mr. Alfred Thompson have been particularly successful. For one performance at Paris there were *eight hundred* dresses laid out in the dressing-rooms, with arms, jewels, decorations, &c., and a proportionate crowd to wear them, who naturally got confused, and put on wrong portions of the costumes, mixing them up in wild disorder. Apropos of velvet, there is at the Lyceum Theatre a second curtain and draperies of this rich material, first used for 'The Corsican Brothers.' It was made in Paris, and contains nearly a thousand yards, and cost, as it is called, 'a fortune'—about 600*l.* or 700*l.* In the 'Princess Ida' each young lady of the band of young ladies had three dresses, costing 60*l.* for the suite, and as there were some thirty or forty of these fair creatures, it 'totalled up,' as the Americans say, to a large figure.

Formerly the scenic artist was strictly a scene painter, and

his work was simply to cover canvas with beautiful and effective pictures. To this class belonged Grieve and Telbin, and Stanfeld, who later became a Royal Academician. The large bold style required for scenery is a fine training, and at this moment it is easy to distinguish one of Telbin's landscapes, so poetical and rich is the treatment. The artist of the Lyceum, Mr. Craven, is also remarkable for richness of colour, freedom of touch, and much grace and fancy. It is curious to visit the painting-room of this theatre, which is high up in the roof, when some great and costly piece is being got ready. Here on a table we find a small model stage, like a toy theatre, but which is carefully made to scale, with all the entrances, &c., marked. The artist first paints his little scenes on cardboard, cuts out the doors, windows, &c. exactly as he intends it to be on the real boards below. He has, besides, large plans of the stage, done to measure, on which can be arranged all the portable structures in their exact position. Now arrives the clever manager, who is possessed of much suggestive taste. The little scene is set for him—it suits—or he may suggest some more brilliant and effective idea. Meanwhile assistants are busy at the canvas hung on the walls, with rules six feet long, ruling the perspective lines in black, or getting in the rough colours. Of course, only a portion of the scene can be painted at a time, as the room is a low one. In the great foreign theatres the canvas can be raised or lowered through a slit in the floor, or the wall made high enough, as at Drury Lane, to take in the whole scene.

But in these times the *scene builder* has taken the place of the scene painter. Houses, bridges, porches, streets even, are all constructed in the carpenter's shop. There is now no system for scenery; all that the stage manager requires is that his stage should be a perfectly clear, open, and unencumbered space on which he can launch his army of men to drag on and build up these great structures. Formerly there were grooves for the scenes to slide in. At the sound of a whistle the scene was drawn away right and left, and we saw the grooves let down on hinges, and in which the new scene was to slide. All this is rococo and old-fashioned. In some of the older theatres one has often seen the two halves of a scene driven from right to left, the two men in their shirt-sleeves who moved them being quite visible, until the halves met in the middle with a sharp crack. Occasionally there used to be an imperfect joining, when, according to the old

story, a fellow in the gallery called out, 'We don't expect no grammar here, but yer might make yer scenes meet.'

Nowadays, or rather now-a-nights, when the curtain rises we see the stage closed in by regular structures—houses, walls, trees, vast flights of steps up or down which people can walk. We have Charing Cross, with St. Martin's Church, the National Gallery, and the Nelson Monument, all squeezed into a small area; while at the present moment there is a built-up Thames Embankment, Cleopatra's Needle and all, exhibited on the London stage. These huge masses cost a vast deal. At the Lyceum, under Mr. Bateman's management, a simple drawbridge in 'Louis XI.,' which was raised and lowered, cost some 25*l.*, nearly as much as it would if ordered for a genuine fortress. But there is a greater expense in the number of stalwart arms necessary to drag these monsters into their places; and how often do we hear from behind the agitated 'cloth' (as it is called) the creaking lumbering sounds as the structures are hauled on, with the shouts of those directing, and the trampling of feet—it is as though a ship was getting in sail on a stormy night; while the poor actors in the garden scene in front are struggling to make themselves heard. This building-up is a complete mistake, with the real houses, real cabs, real omnibuses, and the like. All these things, in proportion to their pretension, actually introduce the weary prose of life on the stage—earthy details are ignored in exciting or interesting situations. Poetry and illusion are always general.

It is wonderful how science and ingenuity are now applied to stage contrivances. In some theatres abroad a system of hydraulic power is used to elevate, as by a lift, any given portion of the stage. In this fashion a touch of a lever will cause banks and flights of steps and terraces to rise to any elevation. Most ingenious of all is the New York Theatre, where there are no less than two stages—one below the other, and each complete; when one scene is going on, the next scene is being set and arranged, and when the curtain falls this ascends and takes the place of the first. In this theatre the orchestra is placed in a gallery over the curtain.

All the great theatres are furnished with an apparatus of huge counterpoises, and in elaborate pantomimes—particularly the transformation scenes—they are indispensable. These travel up and down beside the walls, the cords passing over pulleys close to the ceiling. We notice with what smoothness and ease the great

drop-scene, of say Drury Lane Theatre, weighing many tons, glides aloft or descends. To wind it up would require the united strength of many men, and at the slightest relaxation the weight would overpower them and the whole come crashing down. As it is, a single man can raise or let it down. This is contrived by the counterweights which balance it almost to a nicety, and a small windlass can do the rest. In the grand transformation scene of our Christmas pantomimes—triumphs of beauty and mechanism—we all recall how the scene opens, to reveal another, and yet another beyond that; how some portions glide away aloft; how huge golden flowers expand their leaves and discover lovely beings—or what appear to be so—reposing on the leaves; how these come gliding down to the front; and how beyond them are revealed rows of still more lovely and celestial creatures, rising slowly on clouds, the whole crowned by a central fairy perched in apparent security on a golden sphere! There is no hitch, no hesitation. We wonder and are dazzled. All this is contrived by the counterweights. A long platform, the whole length of the stage, is prepared, suspended at each end by ropes passing over pulleys, and balanced by weights. At rehearsal the young ladies are placed on the platform, and sufficient weights are added until the whole is balanced nicely. Then a single workman can wind them up or down. The young ladies who appear to be floating in the air or reclining on clouds or branches of trees, often forty or fifty feet from the ground, are strapped securely to what are called the irons—long branches of the toughest metal. As it may be conceived, this duty requires a good head. But there are always plenty of volunteers for the post; perhaps from a laudable desire for exhibition, which is the life of the stage; for who will not say that a young lady in the air has a much better chance of appreciation than a young lady on *terra firma*. While making protest against the exhibition of these elaborate structures on the stage, all credit must be given to the ingenuity of the scenic artist and his property-man. It is not too much to say that there is nothing that they will not put on the stage. The English manager is the most daring and ambitious, and has much of the adventure that distinguishes the British merchant. Parisian managers cannot come near him. But they indeed are hampered by regulations of police and rules of state. Once on a time Mr. Hollingshead disposed of his grand Christmas pantomime or spectacle to the management of one of the great Paris houses, and went over himself to aid. But he could do

nothing. When he gave orders for lights, &c., to bring out the effect, he was stopped at once. It was against a police regulation: for a fixed number of lights behind the scenes there must be a certain number of firemen. Hence to produce a glittering scene such as we have in the 'Bowers of Bliss,' you must add these extra firemen at extra expense.

Many will recall the ghost scene in the 'Corsican Brothers,' which so vividly impressed the public from its mysterious effect. One of the brothers is writing at his table; it is midnight; the other brother is seen in his bloodstained shirt, gliding along towards him in a slow flesh-creeping style. As he moves along he rises, the head only being visible at first. He seemed to pass through the ground, yet there was nothing of the trap-door or other contrivance. It was contrived in this way. An inclined plane, on which were rails, ran underneath the stage through its whole length. On this travelled a little carriage which was drawn slowly up by a windlass. There was a slit in the stage through its whole length, in which were flexible boards made like the shutters used for shop windows, one of these being in front, the other behind the actor. The one in front was drawn away as he advanced, and was rolled up on a cylinder; the one behind him advanced as he moved on, and was unrolled from another cylinder. The ingenious feature was that all these unravellings, windings-up, &c., were performed by a single windlass, so that all moved harmoniously together. The greatest care had to be taken to keep all free and smooth, as the slightest hitch would imperil all; for, as we know, there is but one step between the sublime and the ridiculous.

There was a wonderful effect produced in the opera of the 'Africaine' in Paris, when the whole stage represented the deck of a huge vessel, and the audience saw it rise and fall as if at sea. This was contrived by balancing the central position only of the stage on a pivot—for by means of nicely arranged weights this segment could be swung up and down in a see-saw sort of style, and the eye, being deceived, imagined that the whole stage was moving. Ships are often brought on the stage, and with effect, though sometimes they are ludicrous failures.

Some years ago there was a play by the late Mr. Robertson, in which was represented the going down of the 'Birkenhead,' when the soldiers so gallantly kept their discipline and went down with the vessel. The scene disclosed a vessel as she appeared



sailing, with the blue waves about her, a man at the wheel, while a marine walked up and down on guard. As the whole vessel was shown and the stage was a small one, it might be calculated that this transport, with its seven or eight hundred men below, was some fifteen feet long, about the size of a fishing-boat! However, as the vessel struck the rock—a sound produced by springing a rattle and a stroke of the big drum—at least half a dozen soldiers stood to arms in their ranks on the contracted deck, and at the signal were let down slowly through the open trap to their watery grave!

This loading of the stage with heavy, built-up structures really affects the action, for the scene can only be changed once in the act. Very different from the old days, when there were often four or five scenes in an act. The author has latterly found himself cramped and fettered, and the audience cries out against the monotony. Of course there is the old resource of 'the carpenter's scene.' Within the last few years some genius has discovered a remedy worse than the disease. We see the stage set out with huge erections—say, a practicable house at one side, with the interior of a room in which the respectable city man has just been writing his will before being murdered by his wicked nephew; a garden wall in front; trees and a gate at the other side. Suddenly we hear the scene-shifter's whistle; a sound of rumbling and wheeling of castors begins; the house begins to move, and, wonderful to relate, turns round on its axis; the wall opens and wheels away right and left, the trees revolve bodily; the whole scene, as it were, turns inside out, and now reveals a drawing-room in a palatial mansion in London; all which is attended by a screamings, rumblings, and groanings. This was carried to its extreme in Miss Anderson's revival of 'Romeo and Juliet,' sometimes with grotesque effect, as in a fine Italian chamber where there was a beautiful Venetian four-post bed. Juliet had said in witching tones, 'It is the lark,' and Romeo had just let himself down from the window. All the romance and exquisite poetry of Shakespeare was in the air at the moment, when, lo! the walls began to shake, portions of the room to revolve, and, wonderful to relate, the four-poster itself swung slowly round, its feet lifted in the air! This wonderful four-poster became a fountain on the spot in the next scene.

These sudden pantomimic changes destroy all illusion. At the Lyceum, however, the lights are invariably lowered, and the



change takes place in a mystery. At another theatre there was a scene of an outcast mother, on a snowy night, seated on a doorstep, with her child of course. It was the snow-covered doorstep of one who ought to have shielded and given her shelter. Her piteous case moved the house, especially when she rose from the doorstep to seek the fatal river outside. When the scene was about to change, what would become of the doorstep? It could not be left behind, or be carried away by men, or rise in the air. With a loud and sudden flap, the doorsteps ingeniously shut up like a venetian blind, and then the door moved off to the side! It need not be said there was much merriment at this feat, and the gymnastic doorstep put the sufferings of the lady out of all heads.

One of the most ambitious and striking scenic effects ever displayed was in Tennyson's romantic play of the 'Cup.' In the second act was shown the interior of a temple formed with rows of large pillars—its pediments all real and practicable. The actual building up of this structure between the acts at the Lyceum was a most wonderful display of ingenuity, energy, and organisation. The instant the drop-scene fell, a crowd of men—some thirty or forty—rushed on the stage, each carrying a pillar, an altar, steps, when from the roof came, descending by ropes, all the upper portions of the temple, which hung there till their supports were ready. In ten or twelve minutes, under the intelligent command of their stage manager, Mr. Loveday, everything was in order. The pillars were made of paper or papier-maché—a common material now on account of its lightness—and in this fashion: the pillar was modelled in clay, with raised figures and other designs; on this was pasted sheets of brown paper, which follow the relief exactly until the proper thickness is reached. Huge trunks of trees, full of knots and branches, can all be represented in this convenient way. The modelling of the figures of the classical gods and goddesses, all in admirable relief, was all done by the common property-man of the theatre. Mr. Knowles, the editor of the 'Nineteenth Century,' who is also an architect, designed this temple and all its details. When Mr. Wilson Barrett revived 'Hamlet,' Mr. Godwin, an experienced and accomplished architect, was called in to direct the erection of the buildings that filled the stage. Thus, if we have buildings on the stage, it is as well to have a regular architect to see that all is done correctly.

The monstrous masks we see in the pantomimes at Christmas, very clever in their grotesque expression, are modelled by the

property-man in clay. He has a looking-glass before him, and twists his own features into some fantastic expression. When the model is finished boys paste on the layers of brown-paper, which the painter colours.

Let us next turn to the various mechanical phenomena of social life that are exhibited on the stage. The French have a proverb that 'Nothing is sacred to a sapper,' but there is nothing that your stage carpenters cannot grapple with and mimic. Earthquakes, storms, thunderbolts, fires, waterfalls, animals, steam-engines, ships, &c, he is ready for them all, and on the whole succeeds wonderfully. How is the roll of thunder contrived? Formerly a large sheet of iron, hung up at the wing, was rattled noisily; it sounds exactly as one would expect it would, that is, as unlike thunder as possible, and very like striking a tea-tray. But there is 'another way,' as Mrs. Glasse would have it, more terrible and effective. In the larger theatres the property-room is placed over the audience. Here is wheeled along a sort of truck laden with round shot, which tilts over on a hinge, and sends the balls tumbling over each other, to be followed by a hollow sound as they roll over the floor.

For lightning a long tin tube with a spirit-lamp is used. A powder is then blown through, which takes fire as it passes by the spirit and gives out a vivid flash. The most effective, though most troublesome, mode is to cut out of the scene zigzag strips in imitation of forked lightning; these are covered with varnished calico and painted.

Rain is imitated by the rolling of peas in a long tube; wind, by revolving a roller against a rough cloth. These are not quite as impressive as they might be. The most absurd attempt at illusion, and which is still retained at first-rate theatres, is the attempt to represent any crash, such as the breaking open of a door, or falling downstairs. Tradition requires that this should be invariably done by springing a rattle accompanied by a loud stroke of the drum, with perhaps a heap of broken glass emptied from a basin. Anything more absurd cannot be imagined, especially the rattle portion.

There have been some wonderful stage conflagrations of late years in various melodramas, such as 'The Streets of London,' but Mr. Fechter, I believe, was the first to give a good fire. We see the gloomy house where the villain lives and is concealed, and where the innocent and persecuted maiden has been secretly

immured. Suddenly smoke is seen issuing, then sparks; the alarm is given, crowds rush in, police, fire-escapes, and finally a real engine of the 'brigade,' drawn by real horses, dashes up at full gallop. The persecuted maiden appears at the window; the lover seizes her in his arms and descends in shouts of triumph. Meanwhile the walls fall, beams tumble down, the villain is seen consuming slowly, the conflagration glows, and old people in the stalls rise nervously, and say, 'This is really carrying the thing too far.'

Yet only let us go behind the scenes, and, wonder of wonders! all is calm, quiet; no flames to speak of, and no danger whatever. Nothing is more simple than the agency employed. The ordinary limelight turned on to the full suffused the stage in a flood of light, while crimson glasses are used, which impart a fierce glow of the same tint. Any vapour of the whitest kind moving in such a medium would at once give the notion of volumes of lurid smoke. Accordingly, a few braziers filled with a powder known as 'lycopodium' are placed at the wings, fitted with a sort of forge bellows, each blast producing a little flame and smoke. The lights in front being lowered, rows of little jets, duly screened, are made to follow the lines of the beams, rafters, &c., and thus make these edges stand out against the fierce blaze. The view, therefore, from behind has thus an almost prosy and orderly aspect; but the effect is complete. In an instant the conflagration ceases, a turn of a cock extinguishes the jets, the bellows are 'unshipped,' and the flames disappear, the limelight is turned off, and the carpenters are seen busily hauling away to the right and left the heavy 'practicable' rafters, &c., of the lately burning palace.

Another new agent in scenic effect is the use of steam, which is supposed to give the vaporous effect of clouds in motion, hitherto attempted by gauzes and painted cloths. This was first used at the Munich Opera House, and is now elaborately applied in the Lyceum 'Faust,' just produced. A regular steam-engine or generator was fitted up under the stage or at the wings; at the proper moment a number of cocks were opened, and the whole scene was filled with vapour. The impression was anything but favourable. It was impossible to prevent the hissing sounds, and though it had the effect of hiding the [solemn half-mortal heroes of the 'Nibelungen Lied,' it was said that a worthy housewife in the audience exclaimed in alarm, 'Bless me, if the coppers ain't a busted.'

Making up the face, as it is called, is an art in itself; by it the old can be made to look young, or at least younger, and the young old. By these arts the famous Déjazet, when eighty years old, could play successfully a young page. Formerly a burnt cork, a piece of chalk, and a pot of rouge was all that was necessary; now your well-graced actor has his 'make-up' box, or dressing-case, containing stores of violet-powder, Fuller's earth, chrome yellow, blue, crayons, umber, cosmetic, black enamel, 'joining-paste,' with other unpleasant things. All have their purpose. Are you the hunted villain skulking from justice in the woods, you must rub your cheeks and chin thoroughly with thick blue powder, to leave the idea that you have not been able to shave for a week. Or should you be an aged crone or hag, a few blue streaks on the arms or hands suggest the well-marked veins of old age. To be particularly youthful and lover-like you must whiten your face thoroughly, rouge well up to the eyelids, and then draw a little brown streak under the eyes, which lends brilliancy. An old man has a very disagreeable task before him. He must rub his cheeks and chin well with Fuller's earth; then with a camel's-hair brush proceed to make three dark streaks between the eyes, with long lines from the nostrils to the corners of the mouth, then get on what is oddly called his 'white bald wig,' the bald portion of which is fixed to the forehead by 'joining-paste.' A striking additional effect is produced by giving the effect of teeth being wanting, which at first sight seems an almost impossible thing to do. But in your 'make-up box' you find your black enamel, with which you paint over a couple of teeth; in a few minutes it sets and hardens, and a most satisfactory and disagreeable evidence of old age is the result. A mode of attaching whiskers was the old-fashioned one of hooking them on to the ears. But there is an article called 'crape hair,' which is gummed on to the cheeks, and when dry can be trimmed and combed like real whiskers. As regards the nose, there is an elegant way of treatment, namely, by fitting on a well-modelled papier-maché one; but there is the more rough-and-ready mode of dealing with it. We read in one of the text-books on the subject the following grave directions: 'In some low-comedy characters, such as Bardolph, &c., it is necessary to alter the *shape* of the nose in order to give it that bloated, blotchy appearance so noticeable in drunkards. You must first gum on to the end of the nose a piece of wool, press it down to the shape and size required,

then powder it well with rouge to match the rest of the nose and cheeks. The cheeks may also be enlarged in the same way. The other, and perhaps the better, way is to take a little powder, mix it with water and work it up into dough; fix it to the nose with spirit gum, mould it to the shape and size required, and then powder it with rouge to match the cheeks, &c. Blotches, warts, and pimples may be made by sticking on small pieces of wool and colouring them either brown or red.'

We may thus fancy our unhappy actor complete, his woollen nose stuck on with gum, his eyebrows and whiskers well glued to him, his black enamelled teeth, his cheeks plastered with rouge, white, and umber, his 'bald wig' fastened to his forehead with 'joining-paste,' and we may wonder indeed how he can find spirit or even ease to utter his words!

The old super, as he was contemptuously called, was an unhappy creature enough, receiving a shilling a night for carrying a banner, wearing a monstrous mask, or doing duty as the army. Now he is on a much better footing: for intelligence is needed, and he is required to act. In this view soldiers of the Guards are now regularly employed. In a late popular piece called 'In the Ranks,' where the hero enlists and deserts, a party of the Grenadiers attended every night for more than a year to arrest, overpower, and otherwise treat severely Mr. Charles Warner, being, moreover, hooted every night by a sympathetic gallery. As military duty was not to be interfered with, a contract was made with the Sergeant-Major, who supplied a fixed number of men every night who had gone through rehearsal, and who were always ready when their comrades were on duty. For a new naval piece at the Adelphi, a hundred men of the Naval Reserve were in training. Soldiers, from their drilling and habits of obedience, are found to make admirable supers.

All these adjuncts to the scene 'inflammably' the cost of producing pieces. 'Michael Strogoff' in Paris cost no less than 18,000*l.*, and the very blacking of the faces in an Indian piece cost 5*l.* a night. Mr. Irving is said to have given 500*l.* for a peal of bells, to be rung in his new piece. What wonderful salaries the poor despised player now gets and has got; one lady receives 50*l.* a week, and a favourite comedian 80*l.*, while the average competent player will take less—25*l.* or 30*l.*

The truth is, the more show and splendour is cultivated, the more acting, which some foolish, old-fashioned people think to be

the real entertainment of the stage, decays. It is overpowered by the lights, scenery, rich dressing, and shows. All this, besides, spells bankruptcy. Let us hope for a speedy return to the pure, unalloyed delights of simple acting, with a well-painted cloth at the back, and handsome but not unobtrusive dresses. As good wine needs no bush, so a good play needs none of these adornments.

Of late days there has grown up this eagerness to secure free admission and see for nothing what is really one of the most expensive forms of entertainment. This craving has spread enormously, and all sorts and conditions of men, and women too, seem to devote a portion of their lives to order-hunting. Unfortunately, too many managers who have been saddled with a bad piece cannot afford to have empty stalls. On such occasions they welcome such visitors, but the appetite of the latter grows by what it feeds on, and the person who has once tasted of an order becomes like the dipsomaniac and habitual drinker, to pay money becomes intolerable. Mr. Dickens, in one of his happiest speeches, humorously describes this extraordinary mania. 'I was once,' he said, 'present at a social discussion, which originated by chance. The subject was, "What was the most absorbing and longest-lived passion in the human breast? What was the passion so powerful that it would almost induce the generous to be mean, the careless to be cautious, the guileless to be deeply designing, and the dove to emulate the serpent?" A daily editor of vast experience and great acuteness, who was one of the company, considerably surprised us by saying with the greatest confidence that the passion in question was the passion of getting orders for the play.

'There had recently been a terrible shipwreck, and very few of the surviving sailors had escaped in an open boat. One of these on making land came straight to London, and straight to the newspaper-office, with his story of how he had seen the ship go down before his eyes. That young man had witnessed the most terrible contention between the powers of fire and water for the destruction of that ship and of every one on board. He had rowed away among the floating, dying, and the sinking dead. He had floated by day, and he had frozen by night, with no shelter and no food, and, as he told this dismal tale, he rolled his haggard eyes about the room. When he had finished, and the tale had been noted down from his lips, he was cheered, and



refreshed, and soothed, and asked if anything could be done for him. Even within him that master-passion was so strong that he immediately replied he should like an order for the play.'

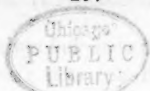
One of the best anecdotes connected with orders is connected with the management of Charles Mathews. During that disastrous period no one had so much need of them, but he sometimes capriciously took no notice of the applications for stalls. A friend who had thus applied reproached him. 'Perhaps,' said Mathews, 'you did not enclose a stamp with your envelope?' 'I did,' said the other, 'I always do.' 'Well,' said the *debonnaire* Charles, 'go on doing it, for they are often useful.' This was quite in the best vein of comedy.

Many, no doubt, have been surprised at the clockwork regularity which attends the entrance of every player. Dozens of times through the course of a long night each appears at his proper moment, and this, too, often for hundreds of nights. All this is in the hands of a single man, the prompter—the person, as Sheridan remarked at an amateur play, that he liked the best because 'least seen and most heard.' His slave is a little familiar call-boy. The players are all laughing and talking in the green-room, and do not give a thought to the stage. A minute or two before the leading lady is wanted, the prompter's eye falls on a warning note in his book; he gives the name to his little familiar, who at the next moment is at the green-room door proclaiming shrilly, 'Miss Four Stars,' with the place of entrance, 'O.P.', or 'P.S.', or 'C.' Neither has the performer to burden his mind with the thought of the various little articles wanted for the scene—the letters, bag, basket, ring, snuff-box, &c., are all handed to him as he goes on. There are often amusing mistakes owing to carelessness, when the actor finds he has forgotten to provide himself with the genuine will, to confound the villain who has just produced the forged one. The clever actor cultivates this readiness of resource so as to carry off any little *contretemps* or delay with some pleasant impromptu. Some years ago an author, who was behind the scenes, was making himself agreeable to a leading actress, seated at a table in the centre of the stage ready for the curtain to rise. By some accident the usual warning was forgotten, and of a sudden up rose the curtain. Our friend, instead of rushing away in a panic, made a profound bow to the lady, and saying, 'Madam, I shall give your message to the Marquis,' withdrew slowly. It was not till the end of the



play that one or two bethought themselves of this Marquis who never appeared, who in fact was not in the play. Mr. Dickens used to tell of an actor whom he had seen at a country theatre, and who having forgotten his part could get no attention from the prompter. Shaking his head tragically, he said, 'I will return anon,' then stalked away to refresh his memory. No one had a keener appreciation of all the humours of the stage.

One of the great perplexities for managers has been to secure themselves against robbery of their receipts. The money-taker and the ticket-taker have often entered into a league: the ticket-taker brings back the tickets issued, which are issued again, and thus there is no check. In the days of Garrick there was an official known as 'the numberer,' who had a box of his own at the side of the house, and at different periods of the night counted the house. The free tickets being deducted, a rough estimate was thus obtained of those who had paid. An ingenious American invention has been introduced into Drury Lane and the Lyceum Theatres, and has long made fraud impossible. The principle is that no ticket can be issued without passing through a little machine which registers the number much as a turnstile does. The pigeonhole where the money is taken is made too small to allow the ticket to pass through—the money-taker turns a handle and a metal ticket is dropped under the hand of the payer. There is, in short, no way of giving a ticket save through the agency of this machine, which, as I say, registers. At the Princess's another American system has been introduced to save the trouble and confusion of booking places. The tickets are made exactly like railway-tickets, each with its own date and number of place, fitted also into little compartments. The customer asks for a particular seat on a particular day, this is handed to him, and the transaction is complete.



## THE DEADLEIGH SWEEP.

HE who has formed his estimate of Essex scenery by what he has seen on the north bank of the Thames between London and the sea has formed an unjust—unjust because imperfect—opinion of its quality. Essex is by no means all marsh and unreclaimed fens, treeless, flat, watery—an English Holland. Few counties can rival it in the beauty of its villages, composed of timber and plaster cottages, the plaster skilfully and effectively worked over into patterns by combs, roofed with tiles of russet brown. The churches are built of brick or of unbaked clay-cobbles, round nodes of indurated clay found lying dispersed in the mud and now collected to be burnt to make cement.

The small towns of Essex are also charming, towns of old red brick and tile, imbedded in elms.

One of the most delightful of these old Essex towns is Deadleigh, in the shallow valley of the Stour. It consists of one broad street of old houses, some plaster and timber, with acute gables towards the street, and odd bay windows, snuggeries to sit in, thrust out at the corners, and of brick mansions erected between the reigns of Queen Anne and George IV.—none later; of a stone church with stately tower, dignified, encrusted with mural tablets telling of a past when Deadleigh was a place where family and fashion congregated; of an assembly-room with Doric portico, now turned into a furniture-dealer's lumber-room; and of a red brick grammar school, with moulded brick pediments and cornices and windows, most picturesque, and a cricket-ground behind shadowed by giant elms as ancient as the ancient school.

Very little traffic passes now through Deadleigh, since the Great Eastern Railway has passed it by contemptuously, without according it even a Deadleigh Road station, and, cruellest cut of all, Mr. Keith Johnston has not admitted the existence of such a town into his Royal Atlas, though Deadleigh once returned a member, and still numbers a population of two thousand souls.

Deadleigh is a Herculaneum of old English life. The old English tavern is there, the 'Rose and Crown.' The mansions are there, delightfully dignified and respectable, wherein lived gentle families more or less remotely allied to the country people,

and accepted by these latter as belonging to the same order of mammals. In the church are still the dear old pews in whose corners one can snuggle and sleep away a hot Sunday morning as in the days of one's childhood. May the hand of that devastator of old associations, old beauties—the Restorer—never fall on Deadleigh Church. In the grammar school, let us believe, the boys still learn out of the 'Eton Latin Grammar,' and repeat 'As in præsentī' as in the olden time.

Deadleigh lies, as already said, in the valley of the Stour. It is imbedded in gentlemen's seats, the parks close around it, as a rich green velvet mantle, clothing it at once with beauty and with respectability. Only towards the east does this velvet mantle fall away, to disclose a garment of many colours, for the valley of the Stour is favoured by flower-seed growers. From May to July it is a glorious sight, a carpet of nemophyla, stock, phlox, pansy, verbena, lychnis, escholzia, gilly-flower, heliotrope—no, there is no cataloguing the variety of bloom and colour and fragrance of this rainbow-clad valley. Go and see it. Run down from town by an early train some morning in June, when the sun is shining and the dew is sparkling, and you will carry away with you into after years the reminiscence of one of the most delightful jaunts you have made. When you are tired of the flowers and the old red-brick houses, wander in the lanes, and you will light on subjects which Constable would have rejoiced to paint—nay, which he did paint, for was not this Stour valley his native cradle, and is not his mill still standing, with the same silvery willows, the same great elms, the same blue sky overhead with white lumbering clouds in it, exactly as it was a hundred years ago!

A little way outside of Deadleigh stands a fine mansion of red brick two hundred years old; it has a tiled roof the colour of roast coffee, brick and tile are stained, softened in tone, and mottled with yellow and grey lichens, and the house is large; it consists of a main body with two wings. The wings continue the same range of tall windows, and are in the same axis. The roof's are, however, a little lower than that of the central block, which apparently contains the state apartments. This central block has one enormous stack of chimneys, also of red brick, and, capriciously, the gilly-flower seed, blown by the winds from the garden, has taken root in the interstices between the bricks, and the old chimney-stack is garlanded with yellow and brown wall-flowers.

There are chimney-stacks, inferior in size, to the wings, but no flowers wreath them. The reason, no doubt, is that these latter chimneys are used, and get too hot for roots to live in them, whereas the central block of chimney never gives forth smoke.

The mansion stands well back from the road, with a lawn before it, and yew trees banking each side. On the side of the house away from the road are the gardens that stretch down to the river. Access to the place is obtained through a noble pair of hammered iron gates, or through a side wicket.

The house had been unoccupied for a number of years except by a widow and her daughter, who tenanted one wing. The proprietor lived in London—Deadleigh was too dull for his taste, and Deadleigh was also too dull to induce those gentlefolk seeking houses to settle there and rent the mansion.

The widow who lived in part of the house was a person highly respected in Deadleigh. Her husband had been a surgeon, in practice there. On his death she was left with so little means that a subscription was raised in the neighbourhood, which reached a thousand pounds, and this was invested for her. She lived on the interest very quietly, and rent free, for she was allowed by the owner of the mansion to occupy one wing on condition that she kept the rest of the house in order, lighted fires in the winter, opened windows in summer, had the carpets shaken occasionally, and the window-frames painted periodically.

Mrs. White was well-housed at no cost, and she and her daughter Mabel had not only the run of the mansion, but also the grapes from the vinery and the vegetables from the garden, and the fruit from the orchard, as much as they needed; and all they did not want they sold, and from the receipts paid the gardener, and accounted to the owner for the rest.

At last, to the alarm and grief of Mrs. White, the proprietor died, and, consequent on his death, the house was sold, and purchased by Mr. Corder, of Birmingham.

Mr. Corder was, or rather had been, a button manufacturer; not a maker of all kinds of buttons, but a specialist—a manufacturer of smoked mother-of-pearl buttons.

For many years Mr. Corder had done badly in business, there had been no demand for smoked mother-of-pearl. Corduroy was only worn by cheap-jacks and velveteen by gamekeepers, and smoked mother-of-pearl buttons go with corduroy and velveteen as certainly as primroses and peacocks went with Lord Beaconsfield,

by inherent fitness. Now the cheap-jacks are dwindling in numbers, and the gamekeepers are not many, consequently the market for smoked mother-of-pearl buttons was sluggish, till by a freak of fashion a rage for wearing velveteen came over the English people. The gentlemen wore velveteen jackets, and the ladies velveteen gowns and bodies. With the velveteen came in smoked mother-of-pearl as a matter of course. The demand for buttons of this sort was great, and the factory was engaged night and day in turning them out, of all hues of smokiness, and all sheeny lustres. Mr. Corder rapidly realised a fortune, and then sold his business at the proper moment, before the fashion declined, and sold it, as though the fashion for velveteen and smoked mother-of-pearl buttons was as certain of maintaining its place as the Government of Mr. Gladstone, or as securely established as the Church of England. Mr. Corder was now clear of business, and with a very handsome fortune safely invested. He had an only child, a son, Mr. Charles Corder, a young gentleman of one-and-twenty, good-looking, better educated than his father, and very idle. Mr. Corder's great ambition was to have his son accepted by society as a real member of the order which stands supreme above trade. So Mr. Corder moved from Mid-England to Essex, away from where his antecedents were known, and bought the mansion-house of Deadleigh, with the intention of settling there, and getting his son married into one of the aristocratic families of the neighbourhood. To accommodate himself to his new position he underwent several transformations. He had been accustomed to wear very shabby coats, more shabby trousers, and most shabby hats; now he assumed a scrupulously smart, if slightly old-fashioned, habit. He had been a Dissenter and a Radical, he now became a Churchman and a Conservative.

Mr. Corder had paid Deadleigh a flying visit to look at the house and learn something of the neighbourhood before he bought the place. When he came there on the completion of the purchase he was accompanied by his son. He put up for a few days at the 'Rose and Crown,' till he could see that all was ready for his reception at the house. He had engaged servants, bought a carriage and horses, and hoped in a month to be comfortably established in 'The Yews,' as his mansion was called. He had purchased the place with its furniture, pictures, and conservatories. The furniture was old-fashioned and poor, and the pictures of no value. When the local solicitor, who had acted as agent for the

late owner, handed over the keys to Mr. Corder, the latter said, 'The house is not in first-rate order. I'll have to do a lot to it.'

'You see, sir,' said the lawyer, 'it has not been occupied for a long time.'

'Now that is amazing,' observed Mr. Corder; 'a large house, and commodious, one would have supposed it might have let for at least a hundred a year.'

'There were drawbacks.'

'What drawbacks?'

'Well, you see, in the first place, Deadleigh is some distance from the railway.'

'But folks as would take "The Yews" would keep a carriage; so that don't count.'

'Then it is far from London.'

'Not so far as Westmoreland or Cornwall; and houses let there.'

'There is no shooting.'

'Every one don't shoot. I don't shoot.'

'Then,' began the lawyer, and hesitated, and added tamely, 'there may be other things.'

'What other things?'

'Oh, nothing, nothing,' said the solicitor, looking uncomfortable.

'I'll tell you what,' said Mr. Corder, not observing his uneasiness. 'That house is full of odds and ends, and traps and dust. I'll begin with a pretty clean sweep.'

The lawyer looked furtively at him, his mouth twitched, and he said, half seriously, half jestingly, 'You must first get rid of the ugly, dirty one.'

'I don't take you,' said Mr. Corder, opening his eyes wide. 'I intend,' he added, 'to have a good substantial sweep.'

'In the place of an unsubstantial sweep,' observed the solicitor, in a low tone.

'Nothing imperfect, unsubstantial with me,' Mr. Corder went on. 'I intend to repaper, recurtain, and altogether refurnish the mansion, after I've had that sweep out I spoke of.'

'The first thing is to have that sweep out.'

'Exactly. I said so.'

'But can you do it? The house would have let readily before, only the late proprietor could not do it.'

'Not have the sweep out?'

'No.'

'Fiddle-sticks-ends. Brooms, brushes, pails of water.'

'No good, none at all.'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean that if the house had not been haunted the house would have let.'

'Haunted! What has that to do with my sweep out?'

'It is haunted *by a sweep*.'

A pause. Mr. Corder sat and stared. The agent looked down, half ashamed, half amused.

'I was not told a word about this,' said the ex-mother-of-pearl button manufacturer.

'We were not bound to inform you of such a matter,' said the solicitor.

'I don't believe in ghosts,' exclaimed Mr. Corder, contemptuously. 'Rats or bad drains is the cause of all ghost stories. Rats make a noise, and drains exhale poisonous vapours which affect the brain. Are the drains wrong?'

'The drains are right—it is the chimney which is wrong. The sweep infests the chimney.'

'What chimney?'

'The stack belonging to the state-rooms. You may have observed gilly-flowers grow out of it.'

'I don't believe a word of it,' said Mr. Corder, impatiently. 'I don't and won't believe in ghosts—no educated people do give credence to these foolish superstitions.'

'Exactly,' said the lawyer. 'I also do not believe a word about the sweep, but unquestionably our domestic servants are not so highly educated as to be superior to vulgar terrors, and it has been found impossible for any one to retain their servants who has tried to live at "The Yews."'

'But who is this sweep? What is he? When did he live? Or rather, when did he die?'

'The story is not romantic, and the incident is not very remote. Some five-and-twenty years ago, in the late proprietor's lifetime, an unfortunate sweep, engaged in cleaning the chimneys of the state-apartments, fell in the chimney. He had been to the top and looked out, in descending a brick gable way, it is supposed, under his foot, and he fell the whole depth of the flue and broke his neck or back, or both, and died an hour after. I remember the circumstance. After that popular superstition would have it that the sweep haunts the central stack of chim-



neys, and at night is to be heard creeping up one flue and down another, and sometimes as falling. He is said to have been seen at the top of the chimney, looking out and waving his brush. Also, on moonlight nights, to have been observed in some of the state-rooms, seated on the stone fender, in a pensive attitude, with his head in his hand.'

'And pray,' said Mr. Corder, with decision in his tone, 'is he surrounded by phosphorescent light, and does he exhale the odour of brimstone?'

'Oh dear no,' answered the solicitor. 'He is very black, and smells strongly of soot.'

'If the ghost had been a figure in chain-mail, or a woman in white, there would have been some satisfaction in having one's house haunted; it would give it respectability,' mused Mr. Corder. 'But—a chimney-sweep—and a chimney-sweep who only died t'other day. 'Tis vexing.'

'Come along, Charles,' he said, after a pause, to his son, and rose from his chair. 'We must be off and to "The Yews." How about these other parties, sir?'—this to the agent.

'You mean Mrs. White and her daughter,' answered the lawyer. 'Of course they leave. You have only to give them notice that their services will not be required, and they must depart. I am sorry for them. Mrs. White is an excellent lady, highly regarded throughout the neighbourhood, much respected by the county people. If, sir, you could possibly retain her in any capacity in the house I believe it would give general satisfaction, be a kindness to her, and that you would not regret it yourself; a more trustworthy, honourable, ladylike person I do not know. If you had desired a housekeeper——'

'I do not want one,' said Mr. Corder, curtly.

When Mr. Corder and his son were in the street, 'Charles,' said the former, 'we must go at once and give the old woman and her kid notice to quit. We'll do it as genteelly as we can, but we'll do it.'

So Mr. Corder and Mr. Charles went to the wing of 'the Yews' inhabited by Mrs. White.

That portion of the house inhabited by Mrs. White was completely cut off from the other portions. The late owner had at one time contemplated the conversion of the mansion into two residences, believing that by this means he would be better able to find tenants. To effect this, and to make both dwellings

equally convenient, he had walled up doors communicating between the parts of the house in such manner as to give one of the state-rooms on each floor to each tenement. Thus, the part occupied by Mrs. White had a large and handsome room on the ground floor, and another on the first floor, and the same with the wing occupied at present by Mr. Corder and his son.

That gentleman when admitted was surprised and impressed by Mrs. White; he found 'the old woman,' as he had designated her, to be a lady with a sweet face, middle-aged, but well-preserved, with the manners of cultivated society. Mr. Charles Corder was not less surprised by 'the kid'—Miss Mabel White—a very pretty girl of eighteen, self-possessed, and with plenty of conversation.

Mr. Corder at once felt that his position was difficult; he was conscious of his social inferiority, and nervous because obliged to turn this charming lady and her daughter out of the house.

He talked about the weather, about the gardens, about the greenhouse, about the furniture, about the neighbourhood and the neighbours; incidentally he learned from the widow that there was a Baronet within five miles who had three unmarried daughters, and he resolved mentally that his son should marry one of them.

'About what is their figure?' asked Mr. Corder.

'Slim and graceful,' answered the lady.

'I don't mean that,' said the ex-smoked-mother-of-pearl-button manufacturer. 'I mean, what is each of them worth in money?'

The widow shook her head. 'Not much,' she said: 'I fear the family is not wealthy. If they had had more dower they would not have remained unmarried.'

'So much the better,' thought Mr. Corder, 'more like to snap at Charlie.'

Casually it came out that Mrs. White was related to the Baronet. Mr. Corder felt abashed and awed when he learned this.

The conversation turned on the ghostly sweep, and Mrs. White said, 'Neither Mabel nor I have been inconvenienced by him personally. Of course we do not believe in his existence, and we have neither seen nor heard him. True,' she added, 'we never enter the state-rooms at night, because we do not occupy them. This wing suffices us, and two ladies do not need more than a snuggery.' After a pause, she said, nervously, and with a smile

to conceal her trepidation, 'But I suppose we shall now have to vacate our lodging—we cannot, of course, expect——'

'Let us not speak of business to-day, ma'am,' said Mr. Corder, politely. 'I have no doubt for a while I shall be obliged to trouble you for advice and information about the place and people, which will be valuable to me as a stranger.'

'Is Mrs. Corder likely to arrive soon?' asked the widow, timorously.

'There is no Mrs. Corder,' said he in reply. 'She left this world of woe fifteen years ago, when Charles was a *Babby*.'

'When your son was a *baby*,' corrected Mrs. White.

'Quite so. I said so,' answered Mr. Corder, with a little colour in his temples. He was aware that he had pronounced his word wrong.

Whilst his father was talking to the widow, Charles was occupied with the daughter, and found himself gradually drawing his chair nearer to her till they were discussing the spectral sweep in a low tone actually *tête-à-tête*.

When the two gentlemen left Charles Corder said to his father, 'So I suppose you have given them notice to quit?'

Mr. Corder grunted.

'It seems almost a pity,' said Charles. 'They are very nice people, and might really be of use to you in the house.'

Mr. Corder growled. 'Look here, Charles! The girl is good-looking, and you are taken with her pretty face. That is the plain English. It won't do. I'll have no Miss-alliances in my family. Charlie, there is a noble Baronet within five miles who has three Baronetical daughters. You must marry one of them. I have made up my mind. I allow you free choice among the three, but sure as buttons is buttons one of them it shall be, or I will leave my fortune to the Orthopedic Hospital.'

Next day, after dinner, Mr. Corder said to his son, 'Charles, I made a mistake yesterday. I forgot to inquire the ages, names, and temperaments of the Baronetical daughters. I think I'll just step over and ask particulars of Mrs. White.'

'Pray don't exert yourself,' said Mr. Charles, starting to his feet, 'I will run across and ascertain.'

'On no account,' answered Mr. Corder, reddening with anger. 'I see what it is—you want to have another look into the blue eyes of Miss Mabel. But I won't have it. The sooner these people turn out the better. I'll go and expedite matters, quicken

their exit, and at the same time learn the ages and sexes of the Baronet's daughters, one of whom is to be Mrs. Charles.' The old gentleman was excited, and did not consider his words. 'If the eldest be cutting her teeth, and the youngest still in long clothes, then of course I do not press the marriage; but—take care. The Orthopedic Hospital may straighten all the feet in Christendom with my money if you take a step against my will.'

The old gentleman was absent quite an hour. When he returned he said, 'The eldest is Mary, aged five-and-twenty; the second, Susan, is twenty-one, and the third, Triphæna, is only nineteen. You may take your choice, but sure as buttons is buttons one it shall be.'

Next day, in the afternoon, Mr. Corder said to his son, 'Charles, I wonder what is the depth of our well, and also whether the water is absolutely pure. I am no water-drinker myself, but I do feel myself morally bound to ascertain that the homely beverage of my domestics is free from zymotic germs.' As he used these last words he looked timidly at his son. He was not sure that he understood them himself, but they sounded well.

'Hallo! father!' exclaimed the young man, removing his cigar from his lips and staring at him.

'And,' continued Mr. Corder, 'I think I will step across to Mrs. White and inquire. One cannot be too scrupulous, you know. Water is ascertained to be the vehicle for the conveyance of disease.'

'You seem mighty ready to hop over to Mrs. White's, father,' remarked the young man.

Mr. Corder grew red in his wrath. 'Charles, I do not like that expression "hopping over"; it is disrespectful. Besides, the implication in your words is distasteful to me.'

After that Mr. Corder was careful not to inform his son when he was desirous of consulting Mrs. White.

'Governor,' said Charles, a few days later, 'it is mean of you to go so frequently to the East Wing and not allow me to visit there.'

'I don't go frequently,' answered Mr. Corder, indignantly.

Mr. Charles whistled.

'Charles,' said his father, bridling up, 'you are wanting in respect. I am your parent. You forget that.'

After this, however, Mr. Corder discontinued his calls on Mrs. White. He was well aware that his son watched him, and he

watched Charles, as he was determined not to allow him to form an attachment for Miss Mabel.

Now the Corders began to experience the inconvenience of inhabiting a haunted house. The servants were in a condition of chronic terror. The maids screamed at the sight of their own shadows, mistaking them for apparitions of the Deadleigh Sweep. The fall of an extinguisher on the stairs sent the cook into fits, and the rats blanched the cheeks of the man-servant.

'I'll tell you what, Governor,' said Charles one evening, 'I'll take a revolver and sit up all night in the upper state drawing-room, and if I see the shadow of a sweep I'll shoot it.'

'Stuff and fiddlesticks,' said his father. 'You shall do nothing of the kind; the maids are scared enough already without your driving them mad with fear.'

'You have seen and heard nothing, Governor?'

'Nothing. Nor you, I suppose?'

'Nothing, absolutely nothing. You don't believe in ghosts, do you, Gov.?'

'No, Charles, I do not. Nevertheless, I think it possible that under certain contingencies a spirit might revisit a spot where a premature death had severed its connection with the body, there to lament the accident. You do not believe in ghosts, do you, Charles?'

'Certainly not, father. Nevertheless, I do not think it would be right in me to deny what so many worthy persons assert on the evidence of their senses to be fact. It would be presumptuous in me.'

'Let us go to bed,' said Mr. Corder, hastily.

Mr. Corder and his son, though neither believed in ghosts, and both scouted the idea of the house being haunted by a chimney-sweep, were wont to retire to bed very much earlier at 'The Yews' than had been their custom elsewhere. Midnight never found them together downstairs, smoking and drinking whiskey-and-water, with the great dark staircase to ascend to their several rooms.

One evening after dinner, when father and son were sitting together over their wine, Mr. Corder said, 'Charles, what a wonderful work of genius that "Enquire Within for Everything" is. I find it an inexhaustible treasury of information. We must re-furnish here, and I took the book down to get an idea out of it, and sure as buttons is buttons there I find instructions how to

choose a tasteful carpet. Why, Charlie, that book contains something of all kinds. I find there receipts for the kitchen, and remedies for scalds, legal information, hints as to etiquette, rules for carving hares, and soles, and poultry, and for light reading, even poetry. At least I've come on one piece, but I can't make it out—poetry, too, by the noble Lord Poet Byron:—

'Twas whispered in heaven, 'twas muttered in hell,  
And echo caught faintly the sound as it fell:  
On the confines of earth 't was permitted to rest,  
And the depths of the ocean its presence confessed.

So it goes on, Charlie, and it means the letter H. Now the book says that it is a very important thing for gentlefolks to know when to sound that letter and when to drop it. That is an art I never could discover. Can you see what the noble poet means when he says that it was whispered in heaven and muttered in hell? The noble poet never meant to consign to a certain place those who omitted their aspirates; he had a liberal education, and could not have been so intolerant. I cannot understand him; but I assure you, Charlie, I lie in bed of a night tossing on my pillow, saying Ouse, and Orse, and House, and Horse, and, upon my word, I get so bewildered I don't know what is right and what is wrong. I never shall learn without a teacher, and I should be ashamed to appear among tip-top gentlefolks and make myself ridiculous with my aspirates. I wish I could find some one who would just put me on the right rails.'

'Don't you think, father, you might consult Mrs. White?'

Mr. Corder coloured. 'I see through you, Charlie,' he said. 'You want to force on an acquaintance with our neighbours, so as to get intimate with Miss Mabel. But I won't have it. You marry one of the Baronetical females, or sure as buttons is buttons I'll endow the Orthopedic Hospital. It is time for you to go to bed, Charles. Good-night. You will find your candle in the hall.'

Mr. Charles Corder dutifully departed, and retired to his room, where he divested himself of his clothes, though the hour was only half-past nine. He did not, however, retire between the sheets, but he redressed himself in a suit of tight-fitting black, rusty, sooty black, put a black cap on his head, with a fall of black gauze to it, which he drew over his face, giving his face a grimy sweep-like appearance. He drew on a pair of black gloves, then took from a cupboard a short black ladder and a brush, and slipped into the state-room on the first floor.

The room had a handsome large open fireplace, the chimney-piece of marble richly sculptured, and festoons of pears and peaches. Charles crept in, planted his ladder within, on the hearth, and proceeded to ascend the chimney. When he reached the summit of the ladder, which was about six feet high, he threw his leg across a partition or stone slab which divided the flue from the flue of the state-rooms of the other portion of the house—a partition which existed only a few feet up the chimney, sufficient for the direction of the smoke from the respective fires. Then he pulled up the ladder, and put it down on the further side, and descended by it into the grand drawing-room on Mrs. White's side of the house.

This drawing-room was thinly furnished with old white-and-gold chairs and tables. The long windows were without shutters, and the full moon poured in through uncurtained glass upon the polished oak floor. No one was in the room. Mr. Charles seated himself, with his back to the fireplace, on the marble fender, in a pensive attitude, leaning his chin in the hollow of his hand waiting, whilst with his other hand he played with his sweep's brush.

Presently the door opened, and Miss Mabel White entered timidly, in a light muslin evening dress, looking very fair, pale, and ghostlike in the light of the moon.

Mr. Charles Corder sprang to his feet and hastened to meet her, with an expression of rapture.

'Oh, Mr. Charles!' said Mabel, in a faltering voice, 'I have done very wrong to inform you of the way through the chimney. You have been injudicious; you showed yourself at the window the night before last, and the stable-boy caught sight of you, and is frightened out of his wits. I hear that some of the maids saw you on the grand staircase, and are persuaded that it is impossible to stay longer in a house where a ghostly sweep is seen. We have done wrong, I in telling you of the way through the chimney, you in taking advantage of the superstitious terrors of the servants to obtain an interview with me unobserved.'

'My dear Mabel,' said the young man, 'I had no other choice. My father is an obstinate old gorilla, and won't allow me to visit here, and would explode like a Fenian's black bag if he thought I had fallen in love with you, and if he knew we were engaged he would keep me out of the house, as sure as Mr. Bradlaugh is kept out, and endow the Orthopedic Hospital to spite me.'



‘But, Mr. Charles, my mother, I fancy, has her suspicions roused, and I would not for worlds have my dear mother know I was concealing anything from her. She has been about a good deal in the night of late, has sent me early to bed, and seems uneasy, as though she suspected something was going on which ought not to take place without her cognisance.’

‘And you dare not ask her consent?’

‘No,’ faltered Miss Mabel. ‘She is so strictly conscientious, and so prim and old-fashioned in her ideas, that I am sure she would consider herself bound to inform your father of everything. I know it is not quite right my meeting you like this every evening, but—but—it would break my heart if I were forbidden to see you and have a word with you. Hush!’

Miss White started, trembled, and laid her finger on her lip. She and Charles stood breathless, for they heard a step on the landing near the door.

‘My mother is prowling about,’ whispered Mabel. ‘Oh, Charles, dear Charles! do please hide. She will be coming in here to see that all is right. There, slip through this little concealed door in the corner. You will find steps descend to the state dining-room below, go in there and await me. I will come down to you when I may. I can step back now unobserved into my room.’

She thrust her lover through an opening in the panel, which was not noticeable to a cursory eye; and he found himself on a newel staircase of stone in the thickness of the wall. A slit in the side allowed a streak of moonlight to enter, and he was able to descend without a stumble. Charles was in his stocking soles, and his footfall was noiseless as that of a cat.

At the bottom was the door into the dining-room, which was exactly under the drawing-room. The door was ajar, and Charles thrust it open with his fingers, and lightly, absolutely noiselessly, stepped into the grand apartment, into which, as into the room above, the moon poured its silvery effulgence. Charles stood petrified with terror. He had softly closed the door behind him, or he would have recoiled through it when he saw—sitting in the moonlight, on the marble fender, with his back to the fireplace, in pensive attitude, head in hand,—THE SWEEP.

Charles uttered an exclamation of horror. The sweep sprang to his feet, took a step forward, saw Charles—another sweep,—and recoiled.

Facing each other, both in moonlight, both casting inky shadows

on the polished floor, both sooty in garment, in face, in hand, each armed with a sweep's brush, stood these two for full a minute, silent, observant, as two duellists waiting the signal to fight.

Each was black in hand, with black feet, black suits, black faced, black capped, each as spectral as the other, and each, for all that, casting a shadow of a consistency as substantial as the other. In one only point did they differ, the second Deadleigh Sweep was stouter in build than the first. This was not reassuring to Charles; he had heard that the sweep who had fallen in the chimney was a man advanced in life, the father of seven children. He considered a moment: was it possible that solicitude for his family, left destitute, caused him to walk? Charles resolved to inquire, and took a step forward. Thereupon, abruptly the other sweep took a step backward, and raised his brush as though to protect himself from a blow. The raising of the brush startled Charles, and he stepped back. Thereupon the other, as though gaining confidence, stepped forward. It really seemed as though each was afraid of the other, as though each heartily wished himself to be a phantom, so as to evaporate and escape the other. How long the two sweeps would have stood confronting each other, speechless, it is impossible to say, had not a door opened, and a female figure entered, with the words—'I am late, but Mabel would not go to bed.'

Charles Corder looked round, and recognised Mrs. White. She did not at first observe him, her eyes were directed towards the sweep by the fireplace.

'I am sure we have both been indiscrete,' said she, 'I in telling you of the way into this part of the house through the chimney, and you in taking advantage of the superstitious fears of the servants to disguise your visits to me. I can quite understand that you are shy of Charles knowing that you intend a change of condition, but still, sooner or later, he must know—and Mabel is becoming suspicious, I can see. However, now I am ready, Hobgoblin! let us practise the aspirate again, for I am resolved not to give you my hand till you can ask for it with an H, nor to become mistress of your house without an aspirate to it.' Then she seemed to observe the frozen, terrified aspect of the sweep, and she turned her eyes—saw the second, screamed, and staggered against the wall.

At that moment, also, a second door opened, and a flush of candlelight filled the room. Mabel appeared, holding a bedroom

candlestick, with an expression of well-affected surprise in her face. At that moment, also, simultaneously both sweeps disappeared, one up the chimney, the other up the newel stair.

'Oh, mamma! how came you here?' asked Mabel.

'I—I—I thought I heard sounds,' answered Mrs. White, 'and timorous though I be constitutionally, yet morally I am strong. I knew it was my duty to see that no one was breaking into the house, so I made my rounds.'

'Did you see anything, mamma?'

'Nothing, my dear, nothing.'

'But you screamed.'

'Yes, at your entering so unexpectedly. Did you see anything, Mabel?'

'Nothing, mamma, nothing.'

'I think, my dear,' said Mrs. White, 'that after all I *did* see something, but it was only my shadow projected by the moonlight against the fireplace.'

'And I, mamma,' said Miss White, 'I admit, that I also did see something, but it was only my shadow, cast by the candle I carried in an opposite direction.'

'Quite so, darling; we saw nothing but our respective shadows.'

'Absolutely nothing else.'

'Let us to bed, then. I am so thankful we had false alarms.'

Next morning Mr. Corder and his son met at breakfast. The father was not easy, and did not seem to enjoy the meal with his usual relish; his hand shook, he upset his egg over the cloth, he buttered his fingers instead of his toast, and put his 'Standard' down on the bacon.

'Did you go to bed directly I left, last night?' asked Charles, slyly.

'Pretty nigh,' answered Mr. Corder without looking up. 'I was not very well.'

'You had no bad dreams, I hope?' said Charles. 'Did not walk in your sleep, whispering the aspirate in heaven, and muttering it in hell, eh?'

Mr. Corder moved uneasily in his chair, and spots of colour formed on his cheeks, he bent his face over his cup, and began to rake some coffee grounds out of it.

'I also was not very well,' said Charles, 'and was unable to sleep, so, my dear father, I made up my mind to watch for the ghost—the Deadleigh Sweep, and lay it, if possible.'

'Yes,' said Mr. Corder, faintly. He was still raking in his cup.

'Well, Governor, I have discovered a way into the adjoining portion of the house, now walled off, through the chimney. So I explored all the grand rooms of both parts of the mansion—in fact, all the four state apartments whose fireplaces open into the haunted chimney-stack.'

'Well,' said the father, with a furtive glance at Charles.

'And I made a discovery,' continued the young man.

'Indeed!' Then the old gentleman upset his coffee cup so as to spill the contents over his nankeen waistcoat and light check trousers.

'I discovered, Boss, that there are no ghosts at all, that the sweep is a myth. The jackdaws have built for years in the chimney, and the noise they make has given rise to the stories that circulate.'

'You—you—you saw nothing?'

'Positively nothing but my own shadow. When I got into the room on the other side, I was scared for a moment by my own shadow. When I raised my hand, it lifted its hand, when I put a foot forward, it put one back. The moonlight was so powerful that my shadow had quite a substantial appearance.'

Mr. Corder looked up with an expression of relief. 'I confess,' he said, 'that I did hear steps last night, and was disturbed by them—so it was you, Charles, walking?'

'I—I only.'

'And you are convinced that there is no——'

'I am positive that this house is haunted by no *black* spirits, but by angels only—there are two of them, *White*—and I think, father, that the wisest course for both of us will be to secure their permanent abode here. If you will take upon you the responsibility of one, I will answer for the other.'

Mr. Corder puffed. 'Charles—there are the Baronetical females.'

'Let them remain as they are. I think, Governor, that you can hardly do better than whisper your aspirate in heaven with Mrs. White, whom I shall be happy to recognise as my mother, if you will consider Mabel as your daughter.'

Mr. Corder was silent. After a while he looked up and laughed. 'The Orthopedic Hospital will have to get on without my help,' he said.

'And "The Yews,"' added Charles, 'will no more be walked by Deadleigh Sweeps'—*soto voce* he added, '*père et fils*.'

*SOME SEA-SERPENTS, ORIGINAL AND  
SELECTED.*

I HAVE often wondered whether anybody has ever pointed out how far all the best-known and most popular sea-serpents, from Bishop Pontoppidan's celebrated beast down to the sportive creature that occasionally amuses himself by appearing suddenly to a yacht's crew in the Inner Hebrides, are indebted for some of their most striking and interesting features to the two very poetical monsters which came across from Tenedos in the second *Æneid* on purpose to devour the imprudent Laocoon. I can never read that famous passage without seeing in it the grand archetype and prime original of all the various genera and species of sea-serpent—past, present, or to come. No doubt the sea-serpent, like most other animals, has varied a little from time to time, and has been affected by the Darwinian principle of survival of the fittest, in proportion as the credulity of the sea-serpent-observing world grew less and less. Still, the monsters that devoured Laocoon possessed in very full perfection all the 'points' that ought to distinguish a perfectly thorough-bred and first prize sea-serpent. Their heads and shoulders were raised (in the most orthodox manner) high above the waves, while their bodies trailed behind upon the surface, rising up in an undulating fashion here and there between the foaming billows. They had a bristly mane upon their necks; and it is well known that a good mane is highly desirable, or even absolutely indispensable, in the get-up of a successful sea-serpent, to this very moment. They were more or less blood-stained and fiery creatures; and the original and only genuine mediæval portent went so far as actually to belch forth flames and black wreaths of smoke from his mouth and nostrils. This last alarming feature, however, has been greatly mitigated in his modern representatives, who now don't care, apparently, to put themselves into competition with an ordinary locomotive, and so content themselves with making the sea boil, and spurring out foam from their unspeakable blowholes (if any). Altogether, the influence of the Virgilian conception, it seems to me, may still be distinctly traced throughout the whole family of existing sea-serpents,

There are a good many theories now extant about the semi-mythical monster, which have been defended with varying ability by various learned men. Mr. P. H. Gosse was of opinion that the sea-serpent (if there be a sea-serpent) was a modern representative of the otherwise extinct saurians, who enacted the part of whales in the teeming secondary seas. Whether any of these big dragons of the prime have really left any descendants or not, there can be no doubt at all that they were certainly very parlous monsters in their own day. Naturally, the biggest things in such extinct reptiles have been discovered in the Western States of America, which whip creation for big trees, big rivers, big fossils, and big fortunes. One of the most disconcerting creatures to meet on a yachting expedition in cretaceous seas must evidently have been that uncanny beast from the Colorado beds, which Professor Geikie soberly describes as 'a huge snake-like form, forty feet long, with slim, arrow-shaped head on a swan-like neck, rising twenty feet out of the water.' According to Dr. Cope, who has closely studied the habits and manners of this unpleasant animal in his native rocks, the monster must often have swum several yards below the surface of the sea, only occasionally popping up his head for forty feet to take a breath, and then withdrawing it to feed forty feet below on the bottom, without once moving the position of his body. Such an unaccountable saurian as this, suddenly rearing his 'swan-like neck' (as if he were a noble Anglo-Saxon lady) within a few yards of the observant pleasure-boat among the Inner Hebrides, would create a far greater impression than any that can be produced by the degenerate and somewhat shadowy krakens of these prosaic latter days.

But Colorado can do even bigger things than this in the matter of gigantic fossils; for Dr. Cope's other protégés, the 'pythonomorphic saurians,' whose name alone ought to strike terror into the souls of every beholder, were seventy-five feet long from the end of the snout to the tip of the tail, and were so very snake-like in form that even solemn scientific men have given them in all seriousness the well-worn title of sea-serpents. They were long and narrow in shape; their heads were big and flat; and their huge eyes, like those of the best and ugliest Chinese dragons, were directed outwards and upwards with a hideous leer. They had a pair of flippers, very like a whale; and on the roof of their mouth they had four rows of formidable teeth, very like a snake. But the most snaky thing about them was their gaping jaws,



which opened wide by a double joint, so as to allow them to swallow their prey whole, after the fashion of our modern cobras. I am not aware that any modern theorist has yet proclaimed the identity of the various scattered sea-serpents of our own day with the pythonomorphic saurians; but if any enterprising young writer cares to act upon the hint in the silly season, when the white elephant has gone to his own place, when Parliament has ceased from troubling, and reporters are at peace, he is perfectly welcome to accept the suggestion without further acknowledgment.

Mr. Searles V. Wood, on the other hand, will have it that the sea-serpent (supposing there *is* a sea-serpent) is not a reptile at all, of what sort soever, but a whale-like monster, belonging to the same group as certain extinct toothed whales who flourished (as the history books say) in the eocene period. The particular part, in fact, which they flourished most effectively, according to Mr. Wood, was their formidable head; and with that they (as well as their hypothetical heirs, executors, or assigns, the modern sea-serpents) were wont to attack less warlike whales, whom they killed and devoured with their big teeth. These undeniable eocene monsters ran to about fifty or sixty feet in length, and were certainly provided with most carnivorous fangs, sufficient to render them very unpleasant contemporaries for the other whales who lived side by side with them. Several of the most respectable authorities believe that the toothed cetaceans in question were really (to put it plainly) big seals, caught in the very act of developing into thoroughgoing whales. They are, by origin, warm-blooded, air-breathing, terrestrial animals, which have taken to the habit of swimming, till at last their outer form has come closely to resemble that of cold-blooded, gill-bearing, egg-laying fish. Mr. Wood has set forth his very hypothetical views with an air of sober conviction which is quite charming in its simplicity, and has assigned the as yet undiscovered sea-serpent to the 'order Zenglodontia,' almost as confidently as though he had got a specimen or two of the evasive monster securely bottled for examination in his own private museum. On the whole, it might be better to follow Mrs. Glasse's admirable advice, and first catch your sea-serpent.

Again, Dr. Andrew Wilson, who accepts the existence of the monster as proved, believes that sea-serpents are in all probability huge over-grown specimens of the ordinary marine snakes. In



this belief he is followed by that learned snake-fancier, Miss Hopley, who stoutly urges the claims of her favourite reptiles (apparently on the familiar principle that there's nothing like leather) to be the original and only genuine sea-serpents, all others being spurious imitations. Very few people, probably, are aware that besides the Great Sea-Serpent, whose existence is so extremely problematical, there are a great many small sea-serpents, so perfectly historical that they have been duly named and classified with scientific minuteness. These oceanic snakes, which usually vary in length from two to twelve feet, are found chiefly in the tropical seas of the eastern hemisphere, and especially in the Indian Ocean. They are very venomous, and are described by those who know them most intimately as 'wild and ferocious.' In calm weather they lie quietly upon the surface of the sea, enjoying their after-dinner repose like the cobra at the Zoo, and saving themselves even the trouble of breathing by their possession of enormous lungs, in which (as in a tank) they store up air enough to last their cold blood for an indefinite period. This ingenious device is not the only modification they have undergone to fit them for their marine existence: the tail is flattened out into a rudder, as in fish, and the undersurface of the body is ridged into a keel, so as to enable them to swim more easily over the crest of the billows. The sea-snakes live on fish, which they poison as they catch, and swallow whole, head foremost.

Now, the question is, could one of the forty-eight known species of sea-snakes ever attain sufficient dimensions to have given rise (allowance being made for human exaggeration) to the best recorded instances of the great sea-serpent? Bishop Pontopidan's specimen, seen off Norway in 1740, was one of the finest on the record, and measured about 600 feet in length. On the other hand, the biggest sea-snake known to Dr. Günther of the British Museum (the great authority on things reptilian) is only twelve feet long; which leaves a considerable margin for the bishop's specimen to make up, even under the most favourable circumstances. Again, the very notable beast spied off Boston, Massachusetts, in 1819, is described with a noble and poetical vagueness as being 'from 80 to 250 yards in length;' which reminds one of the ingenuous advertising dodge, whereby shop-keepers announce that a lot of goods, worth obviously on an average five pounds apiece, are 'from one shilling.' In 1822, a second sea-serpent, spied off the Norwegian coast, was again cal-

culated at 600 feet long, which seems a suspicious reminiscence of the father of all sea-serpents seen by Pontoppidan. Captain Drevar's great snake, which coiled itself twice round a sperm whale, was of indefinite length, but as it raised its head 'some sixty feet perpendicularly in the air,' its total extent must have been pretty good for an overgrown sea-snake.

There can be no doubt that certain kinds of animals do really produce at times abnormally large individuals; and this is particularly the case with fish and reptiles, where the size of the different adults always varies greatly with varying circumstances. Everybody knows that a full-grown trout may be almost any size, big or little; while as for pike, Mr. Frank Buckland records the biggest he ever saw as being no less than 3 feet 10½ inches long. Still, the amount of lee-way that a twelve-foot sea-snake has to bring up before it reaches the 600 feet of the Norwegian specimens, or the 750 of the Boston champion monster, is really too immense to be readily granted by sober reasoning. Moreover, it is a curious fact that sea-serpents should be most frequently seen in the North, while sea-snakes are almost confined to the tropics. Why do the gigantic growths always come northward, to the exact spot where they may be seen by credulous Norwegians and wonder-loving Americans? Is it not just a trifle significant that these portents are oftenest beheld by the superstitious Norse sailors, and the still more superstitious Celts of the west coast of Scotland? According to their faith, perhaps, is it unto them. Where the belief in sea-serpents is strongest, the sea-serpent is oftenest seen. Pretty much the same thing has frequently been observed about ghosts, spirits, latter-day miracles, and most other signs and wonders.

On the other hand, there are some undoubted sea-monsters of very portentous size, whose exceeding bigness has only quite lately come to be recognised as historical. Foremost among them may be reckoned the great squids, or ten-footed cuttle-fish, who differ from that now familiar beast, the octopus, in the possession of two very long arms or tentacles, besides the eight shorter feet which are common to the whole group. Long before the gigantic squids were scientifically recognised, vague stories about them were circulated among sailors, and pictures were even painted (as *ex votos*) representing huge calamaries entwining their arms and clinging suckers round the tall masts of a good-sized smack. An *ex voto*, however, is not exactly evidence, as anybody who has seen the

miraculous escapes in any little Italian or Provençal pilgrimage chapel will readily admit; nor is even the story quoted by Mörch from an Icelandic history, how in 1639 a 'sea spectre' was cast ashore on a fiord, with a body as big as a man's, seven tails, two yards long, and one long tail that ran to five fathoms. (If this was a squid, one arm and one tentacle must have been lost; but there is much virtue in your ifs.) 'The tails were crowded with buttons, like eyes, with a pupil and eyelid, which were gilt.' Truly, a most fanciful description of the suckers on the arms of a big calamary.

Very recently, the big squid has become quite a respectable scientific character, and has been duly admitted to our natural histories under the specific titles of *Architeuthis monachus* and *A. dux*. When an animal comes to have a double Latin name, for genus and species, he may be considered as having fairly forced his way into good society, and attained for himself a public recognition. The first big calamary found in modern times, according to Dr. Woodward, was sighted by the French steamer *Alecton*, off Teneriffe, in 1861. Every effort was made to secure it; but after a long fight, the monster got away, leaving its tail behind it, in the running noose of a rope. This brute was supposed to be about eighteen feet long, with arms of five or six feet more (still a long way off from the sea-serpent). But one must remember that the salmon that got away from one is always a far larger and heavier fish than any salmon one ever actually landed and weighed in the impartial scales of undistorted reality. Perhaps the size of the *Alecton's* squid was computed not in British feet, but in a measure of length equivalent to that well-known angling standard commonly called fisherman's weight.

Later still, several other big cuttles were observed in various parts of the Atlantic. In 1871, a dead specimen was found floating off the Grand Bank of Newfoundland, and its jaws (almost the only portion easily preserved) were sent to the Smithsonian Institute at Washington. The body of this big calamary measured fifteen feet long (bigger than a hippopotamus); the arms were mutilated, but what remained of them was nine or ten feet. Four years later, some Connemara fishermen in a curragh (Irish for what the Welsh call a coracle, a very primitive boat, of wooden ribs, covered with tarpaulin) saw a large object floating to seaward, near the water-worn crags of Boffin Island. On pulling out to it, they found it was an enormous cuttle-fish, basking at

ease on the surface of the water. Being Irishmen, and therefore naturally brave, the men attacked the huge uncanny brute in their fragile craft, and succeeded in lopping off one of his horrible arms. Thereupon, the cuttle turned tail in the most cowardly manner, and made out to sea wildly at a tremendous pace. The Irishmen followed him up vigorously, and at last overtook him, when they cut off his head and another arm. These portions they brought safe ashore, and they may now be seen in the Dublin Museum. It is a delightful thing, in all sea-serpent lore, to be able to point to such solid islands of undeniable fact, here and there, among the vast ocean of myths, surmises, estimates, and conjectures. The arms, which are the short ones, measure eight feet long, and are as big round as a man's leg. At the same rate, the long tentacles ought to have been thirty feet in length.

The honour of setting at rest all doubts as to the great squid, however, certainly belongs to the Rev. M. Harvey, the learned and accurate Newfoundland naturalist. In 1873, two fishermen were catching cod in Conception Bay, when they saw a shapeless mass floating on the water at a little distance. 'Wreck, no doubt,' they said to themselves; and as fishermen are not above salvage, they approached close to it, and struck it with a boat-hook. In a second, the supposed wreck developed suddenly into a fearsome monster, opened its huge staring eyes ferociously with a ghastly roll, and snapped at the boat-hook with its huge bill or jaws. The men were so fascinated with terror that they could not move; and before they had recovered their self-possession the creature was full upon them, shooting out from its head several long fleshy arms, and groping at the boat with them in its hideous fury. Only the two long tentacles succeeded in grappling it, and one of the men, seizing his hatchet, cut off both of them with a well-delivered blow. The cuttle-fish then absconded promptly, which goes to prove that the race, though ill-tempered and savage, is cowardly when wounded. Unfortunately, one of the arms was destroyed before its scientific interest was known; but the other was brought to St. John and examined by Mr. Harvey, who found that the fragment alone measured nineteen feet. Professor Verrill considers that the total length of the animal must have been about sixty feet. A very gruesome monster indeed, no doubt, but still by no means up to sample as a full-grown sea-serpent.

Some months later, Mr. Harvey came across yet another big

cuttle-fish. This time he was lucky enough to secure the entire animal, and to get it properly measured, photographed, and preserved in brine. The body is eight feet long, and five feet round; the long tentacles are twenty-four feet in length, and the short arms six feet apiece. Each of them has nearly a hundred suckers, and every sucker is provided with a living piston, by means of which the creature can create a vacuum the moment it touches its prey, and so reinforce its own powerful muscles by all the weight of the atmosphere and the ocean above the spot it thus fastens upon. 'No fate could be more horrible,' says Mr. Harvey, 'than to be entwined in the embrace of those eight clammy corpse-like arms, and to feel their folds creeping and gliding around you, and the eight hundred discs, with their cold adhesive touch, glueing themselves to you with a grasp which nothing could relax, and feeling like so many mouths devouring you at the same time. Slowly the horrible arms, supple as leather, strong as steel, and cold as death, draw their prey under the awful beak, and press it against the glutinous mass which forms the body. The cold slimy grasp paralyses the victim with terror, and the powerful mandibles rend and devour him alive.' Everybody has read the wonderfully dramatic account of a conflict with a huge cuttle-fish in the 'Travailleurs de la Mer'; but even Victor Hugo's *pieuvre* would be but a pigmy beside Mr. Harvey's gigantic calamaries.

Another Newfoundland clergyman, Mr. Gabriel, measured two still larger squids, cast ashore at Lamaline in 1870, in one of which the body was forty feet long, and in another forty-seven feet. And one of Mr. Harvey's informants measured a specimen which was washed up by the waves a little earlier, and found it to be eighty feet in length. Altogether, the cases collected by this able and very trustworthy naturalist conclusively prove that cuttle-fish of perfectly colossal size do really occur in considerable numbers in the North Atlantic.

Can we conclude then, as a clever writer has lately done, that the giant squids are the real creatures which have given rise to the belief in sea-serpents? To me at least it seems improbable. I can hardly believe that any one form of sea-serpent will cover all the various myths and observed cases. I have, rather, a modest theory of my own as to the true origin and development of the entire family, which I shall proceed to set forth in the usual scientific classificatory fashion.

There seem to be two grand divisions of the genus sea-serpent: firstly, those due mainly to preconceptions and superstitions, and so ultimately mythical in origin; and, secondly, those due mainly to observations, accurate or inaccurate, and so mainly genuine in origin. But no single explanation, I believe, will suffice to cover both kinds; and the particular explanation of each particular instance must depend largely on the nature of the circumstances under which it was seen. Some ghosts are entirely fanciful or imaginary, while other ghosts have a genuine physical basis or substratum in a wooden stake, a sheet, and a pumpkin. Even so, it seems to me, some sea-serpents are purely mythical, while others depend for their first hint, at least, upon some real visible object, more or less correctly observed.

The mythical sea-serpent, in my humble opinion, is by far the commoner animal of the two. His origin goes back in time to a very early period, when he and many other formidable dragons stalked abroad, unchecked and rampant, over sea and land alike. In the old English epic of *Beowulf* there is a very fine monster called the Fire Drake (drake being good Anglo-Saxon for a dragon), which guards a mysterious submarine treasure, and which comes out by night to slaughter the people of the royal hero. *Beowulf* himself goes forth, with his rune-covered sword, to battle with this relentless monster, and slays it, indeed, by his own strong arm, but is blasted by its fiery breath, and dies shortly after the fierce encounter. Now, the old literature of the North is full of sea-dragons of just the same type—fire-breathing krakens, which devour ships: terrible shapes, begotten of the dread and mystery of the ocean, and possessing all the ordinary mythical features of dragon-kind. It is a very significant fact that, as we go down in time, the dragons and sea-serpents of each age are, as a rule, exactly what that particular age expected to find them. In the fifteenth century a dragon that didn't breathe fire would have been quite unworthy of notice, and a mere big marine snake, with a prosaic habit of lolling on the top of the water, would have been considered not one whit better than an ordinary whale or walrus. At the present day, on the other hand, the common sea-serpent possesses few obviously mythical features, though he has still a distinct tendency to retain a mane, which, in the memorable instance of the *Dædalus's* monster, is significantly described as 'something like the mane of a horse, or rather a bunch of seaweed, washing about its back.'



In Norway, to this day, the belief in sea-serpents is almost universal, and there can be little doubt that it is really a survival from the primitive Teutonic belief in the krakens, sea-dragons, and other monstrous mythical beasts. Norwegian seamen are superstitious far beyond the superstition even of ordinary sailors; their faith in Odin and in various other equally mythical people is something quite touching in the present age of criticism and agnosticism. When a man firmly believes beforehand that such a thing as a sea-serpent does really exist, and when he expects to knock up against one any day, quite as casually as he knocks up against a seal or a porpoise, it will naturally follow that whenever he sees any large unknown object he will immediately set it down for a sea-serpent. The coasts of Norway and of the Hebrides are very rough and misty; even known objects loom up through their fogs with marvellous exaggeration; the people are prone to belief, fanciful, and very unscientific: all the elements for the production of a most excellent sea-serpent exist, in short, in the most absolute perfection.

The modern serpent is the heir-general of the ancient dragon, deceased. When the dragon was gathered to his fathers, he left most of his surviving properties and effects by will to his representative the serpent, as residuary legatee. Or, to put the matter somewhat more correctly, the dragon is not yet wholly extinct; he has gradually developed into the serpent by slow and imperceptible changes. Many old draconian peculiarities cling about him even now, in his serpentine guise. The very name itself has a mythical ring about it; for when a man says 'snake' you know at once he means the kind of reptiles dealt in by Dr. Günther and Sir Joseph Fayrer—the ophidians of fact and science; but when he says 'serpent' you know he means the mysterious dragon-like beast who has entered largely into all myth from the beginning of all things. Now, the serpent, as everybody knows, is the father of lies: not only is he (as Falstaff would have said) a liar himself, but he is also a cause of lying in others. Not that the lying need be necessarily conscious or intentional; by far the larger part of it, no doubt, is due to hasty or incorrect observation, distorted by terror, magnified by wonder, and rendered unduly definite by preconception. I regard the man who says he has 'seen a sea-serpent' in much the same light as I regard the man who says he has 'seen a ghost.' Each is applying to a real or supposed object, more or less hastily observed, a term which is mythical in origin, overlaid by superstitions and prejudices, and at



once too definite and too indefinite for the thing he thinks he has seen. Instead of merely stating facts, he is drawing an inference; he is classifying his own experience side by side with certain other experiences and beliefs, the mass of which have come down to us from an eminently uncritical, myth-making, romantic age. Thereby he puts himself immediately out of court: his evidence is either inadmissible or is, at least, worth very little.

It has always seemed to me that the scientific theorists who endeavour to identify the vague and shadowy outlines of that polymorphic and Protean shape, the sea-serpent (if shape it can be called that shape has none, distinguishable in member, joint, or limb), with the enaliosaurians or zeuglodon of sober fact, too much overlook this mythological descent of the questionable beast from the primæval dragon. Accustomed themselves to close and careful observation, rigorous examination of all possible sources of error, accurate weighing and measuring and comparison of parts, they do not readily throw themselves into the state of mind of people who behold a dim visible object bobbing indefinitely up and down upon the crests of the waves, and straightway proceed to envisage it with all the familiar features of the sea-serpent, as they have always pictured it to themselves in their own fancy. The myth-making mind and the scientific mind are so far apart from one another that it is difficult for the one to appreciate the other. Only those who know how easily the supernatural is found where it is expected can at all understand the constant appearance of great sea-serpents off the Scotch and Norwegian coasts. And in saying this I shall not be put to shame, even though next week a real enaliosaurian or zeuglodon or gigantic marine ophidian should be hauled ashore at Bergen or Campbelltown, and duly dissected and classified by Sir Richard Owen or Professor Huxley. For my contention is just this, that even though such a beast really exists, the great sea-serpent of the dog-days is not he, but the lineal modern representative of the mediæval and primæval dragon.

The second or mainly historical type of sea-serpent, I take it, has comparatively little in common with the mythical beast. I don't mean to deny, of course, that even the mythical sea-serpents have usually, in each individual instance, some distinct basis of fact; but the fact is there merely the occasion, not the cause, of the entire phenomenon. The two animals, it seems to me, differ from one another as the spectre of the Brocken differs from the

common domestic ghost; as the mirage differs from the ordinary hysterical illusion. Sea-serpents of this type may be again subdivided into two minor classes: those which have been caught or analysed, and those which haven't. Unfortunately, the animals of the former class have always turned out on closer examination not to be sea-serpents at all, even in the widest acceptation of the term; and so the burden of proof is cast entirely upon the latter.

One of the best captured sea-serpents on record was that caught by the crew of the barque *Aberfoyle* in September 1877. This canny craft was cruising in the classic home of sea-serpents, off the Scotch coast, during the warm summer weather, when (as we all know) the gigantic beast loves to bask upon the surface and sun himself before the eyes of ladies and of knights; and lo! of a sudden, on the lee side, enter a sea-serpent, in humour debonair, basking and sunning himself quite according to precedent on the summit of the water. The gallant crew, congratulating themselves that they had got him this time, lowered a boat forthwith, and proceeded to harpoon the dubious monster with all alacrity. Alas! the harpoon went right through him; and when the *Aberfoyle's* men came to examine him in detail, he proved to be a mass of slime, like decaying jellyfish, some of which, when bottled, finally melted away into a watery consistence. Strings of porpoises, drifting logs, and bunches of wrack have often similarly done duty for a sea-serpent till hooked or closely observed; and it is interesting to note how generally the first description of the object, as it appeared before the disillusion, coincides with all the popular ideas of the sea-serpent, one and indivisible. Especially do they almost all rejoice in well-developed manes; a feature extremely improbable in a real marine beast, but practically indispensable in one form or another to dragons, wyverns, krakens, hippogryphs, unicorns, and other familiar denizens of the mediæval zoological gardens.

The observed but uncaught sea-serpents are harder far to deal with; and in many cases it is certainly possible that they may have been large unknown marine animals. The two best instances are undoubtedly the well-known ones of the *Dædalus* and the *Osborne*. In 1848, Capt. McQuhæ, of the former ship, saw 'an enormous serpent' (note the mythical name—not 'snake'), which passed him rapidly, with head and shoulders about four feet above the water, and a body some sixty feet long. In 1877, the officers of the *Osborne*, with more caution, saw 'a large marine

animal' off the coast of Sicily. It was in 1875 that skipper Drevar of the *Pauline* espied his famous creature, which he describes in his affidavit by the suspicious words, 'a huge serpent.' In all these cases, it appears pretty certain that something was seen, for a good many officers and men were on deck together, and it is not likely that they could all of them have been mistaken as to the main facts to which they testified. But in the very best authenticated instance, that of the *Osborne*, the accounts of the four officers who saw the object showed considerable discrepancies (due, of course, to hasty observation); and in any case, whatever the creature was, it was certainly not a sea-serpent, as the sea-serpent is generally understood. The one thing in which almost all the officers coincide is the statement that the very big beast had both fins and flippers. The captain, who calls it a 'fish,' saw it through a telescope, and thought it had a head like a seal. The lieutenant and engineer saw 'a ridge of fins'; and another officer saw a huge monster 'having a head about fifteen to twenty feet in length.' All these particulars, with others too long to mention, are decidedly and suspiciously whale-like.

Now there can be little doubt that the *Osborne* really did see some very big animal, and the appearance of such an animal is in itself sufficiently remarkable: but it was not—no, it was not the great sea-serpent. Nobody denies that there are many very large creatures in the sea; probably, also, nobody would dogmatically assert that every big marine creature is already, in the ordinary hackneyed phrase, 'known to science.' But before any one can declare that the particular animal he sees *is* new, he must have seen and examined all the other animals of anything like the same size that are now duly recognised by the naturalists. Just consider for a moment how many big marine monsters are actually known, which might be mistaken, singly or in combination, for a sea-serpent or other unnamed prodigy; and then reflect what are the chances that every one of them has been tried and rejected in explanation.

Of the whale kind alone there are a round dozen or more with considerable pretensions on the score of size. Besides those two familiar brutes, the sperm whale or cachelot (from forty to seventy feet long), and the Greenland whale (from fifty to sixty feet), there are many less popular cetaceans which distinctly deserve a place of honour as the Goliaths and Titans among marine monsters. The bottle-head, or beaked whale, not infrequent on the

British coasts, runs to forty feet, and has a narrow serpentine beak; Sowerby's whale, though smaller, is interesting from its possession of a very snake-like head, which tapers at the end into a long snout, while its jaws are armed with two big and fang-like protruding tusks. Cuvier's and Van Beneden's whales seldom exceed twenty-four feet, but they also have extremely snaky forms and faces. As all these last have elevated heads, and rejoice in the possession of a well-marked dorsal fin, it is not impossible that a string of them in motion may sometimes have given rise to appearances like those described by the officers of the *Osborne*. They can also boast of the necessary flippers, which are a very un-serpentine set of organs indeed. Then there is the New Zealand Berardius, only four specimens of which have ever been captured—a long-headed whale, thirty feet in length, with tusks which it can protrude at pleasure from the side of its mouth. The well-known caaing whale is much smaller, rarely reaching twenty-five feet; but its cylindrical tapering body, high dorsal fin, and long flippers admirably adapt it for masquerading in a body as the great sea-serpent, a trick which it is almost certainly known to have played ere now. The orca, that tiger of the sea, measures about thirty feet, but is so enormously swift in its movements that it can overtake and swallow alive even the rapid dolphins; and Eschricht was acquainted with one which contained in its stomach thirteen porpoises and fourteen seals, but was unfortunately choked in the brave endeavour to swallow a fifteenth. A white whale, or a bottle-head, pursued by a string of orcas, with their fins just showing above the trough of the waves, ought to make a very tolerable sea-serpent indeed. As the bottle-head leaped madly out of the water in front, the serpent would seem to be raising its fore part from the surface of the sea. The horn of the narwhal, of course, puts him quite out of the running; but the hump-back whale and the rorqual—the latter seventy feet long, and narrow in form—display some fine sea-serpentine elements of face and feature. These are but a tithe of all the various whales already described by naturalists; of the fin-whales alone there are at least a dozen species, including the great Pacific sulphur-bottom (sometimes a hundred feet long), who glides with enormous velocity over the ocean, and is recognised at an immense distance by the vast jets of spray he sends up seething from his blow-holes at every spout. Again, there are seven known kinds of *Mesoplodon*; and every one of all these kinds, jointly and

severally, must be taken into account, before we can say that any particular marine monster we happen to observe is in fact a new species of sea-serpent.

I will not insist upon any of the numerous other creatures, such as manatees, seven-foot turtles, gigantic squids, and huge swimming lizards, which may have gone sometimes to make up elements in various sea-serpents, new or old, but will content myself with a few true fish, quite big enough to add their mite to the general mystification of the ocean. One hundred and forty different kinds of sharks are known to Dr. Günther, of which the blue shark attains twenty-five feet, and the porbeagle ten. But the huge carcharodon, the most formidable of all its family, reaches the length of forty feet; it is strictly pelagic in its habits, and occurs in all tropical and sub-tropical seas. Forty feet is a fair length; but the *Challenger* dredged up from the deep ooze of the Atlantic the teeth of a still larger shark, at least double that size; and if the owners of these huge fangs are now extinct, they must at any rate have become so within a very recent period. Our own North-Atlantic basking shark reaches thirty feet; and the hammerhead also attains an extremely creditable size. Vastest of all, however, is the enormous rhinodon, a gigantic shark-like fish of the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, which is known to exceed fifty feet, and is said to have arrived at as much as seventy. The tunnies and sun-fishes, though far smaller, may yet sometimes have helped in forming good sea-serpents. A long-nosed whale pursued by threshers has also doubtless done good service more than once in the same fashion.

The final question is just this: In an ocean teeming with so many known animals of huge size, ought we to set down any uncaught specimen as a new species, on a cursory examination, under eminently deceptive and unsatisfactory circumstances? And if we do, are we not in all probability more or less directly influenced by surviving memories of the great extinct krakens and fire-breathing dragons? Are we not, in short, trying to make a sea-serpent out of it? Let us rest satisfied with our big cuttlefish and huge whales and monstrous sharks for the present; and whenever anybody catches us an enaliosaurian or a zeuglodon or an immense marine snake, let us accept their new addition to zoology with all acclamation. Meanwhile, let us urge once more on all theorists, 'First catch your sea-serpent': then proceed to classify him.

*THE STORY OF THE ONE PIONEER OF  
TIERRA DEL FUEGO.*

MODERN ideas of unexplored lands are limited almost entirely to the North and South Poles, whither costly expeditions are constantly being despatched: while in South America alone there are the interiors of Guiana, Brazil, Patagonia, and Tierra del Fuego, besides smaller patches of only half explored land, all calling for more attention than they have hitherto received.

The whole of Brazil has indeed been explored in a superficial sort of way: that is to say, there are certain narrow lines of explored land, chiefly along rivers which intersect the country; but only two people from all the civilised world have ever penetrated beyond the coast of Tierra del Fuego, though the coast itself has been well surveyed, and whalers' boats frequently land there for water.

One of these two pioneers is a Chilian lady who was shipwrecked on the coast, and saved alive by the chief of a Fuegan tribe which murdered all her companions. She was seen alive and happy by the other pioneer, a seaman, by name Thomas Thorold, who spent nearly six months in the interior of this strange country, and came safe home to England again. It is his story that I propose to tell.

Less than six years ago an English sailing ship, homeward bound from Valparaiso, foundered off the west coast of Tierra del Fuego during the cruel, wintry month of July. The crew got into three boats and pulled to the shore, which was not far distant. After rounding a headland, they found themselves in comparatively smooth water, surrounded by bare, bleak hills, beneath which there was a broad sandy beach, which would afford them easy landing.

But on this beach and about the foot of the hills they saw what above all things they dreaded—the signs of the doom they felt must sooner or later be theirs—the stunted forms of Fuegan natives, standing and lying about their rude huts and canoes.

As soon as the Fuegians espied them, they crowded into their canoes and rowed out towards them, while their shouts brought a multitude of natives to the beach, where they clustered like a flock of vultures hovering over their prey.

The Fuegians are a small race, with a dark copper-coloured skin. The men are mostly clad in old vests and trousers that they have acquired from some shipwrecked crew, or from the steamers passing through the straits of Magellan; others wear deer or guanaco skins. The women are dressed more simply in a single garment resembling a *poncho*, made of some skin: a simple square, with a hole in the middle for the head.

Their boats have none of the graceful gliding of the North American canoes, but are simply made of pieces of bark or wood clumsily tied together with fibres, and are awkwardly rowed with oars formed of poles with flat pieces of wood tied on to the end. The only manufacture in which these men—the lowest type of humanity—at all excel, is that of barbed spear-heads, which they make with considerable skill of an almost transparent sort of flint, very similar to some of the arrow-heads used by the wild Bugrés of Brazil. These, dipped in poison and fixed on to long wooden shafts, become dangerous weapons for poor weary sailors to face who have nothing to defend themselves with but oars and stretchers.

Before the three doomed boats were within half a mile of the shore, they were surrounded by seven or eight canoes crammed with these gibbering aborigines, before whom the sailors were perfectly helpless, for from a considerable distance the unerring spears came hurtling towards them. The miserable men tried in vain to parry them. One by one they dropped into the bottom of the boat and died in agony, as the fiery venom from the spear-heads coursed through their veins.

Suddenly, when there were only two or three left untouched in each of the boats, one of the Fuegians, who seemed to be a chief among them, gave a shout that made all the others stand motionless, with spears poised in their hands; and he spoke to them in their loud, cracked language for a minute or more: it seemed years to the helpless men waiting to be killed.

At the helm of one of the boats sat the mate, Thomas Thorold, a tall, strong man of about thirty, towards whom the chief pointed several times as he was speaking. Soon he stopped shouting and gesticulating, and again the spears came whizzing from the strong savage arms.

But a change had taken place: the weapons were aimed at all the sailors except Thomas Thorold. He sat there untouched, expecting every moment to receive his death wound, and receiving it not. Only he saw his companions dropping one by one, meet-



ing their deaths bravely, as Englishmen are wont to do, but with features tortured into that rigid glare which indicates the height of suppressed terror and extreme suspense.

When at last the mate was the only living one left, to his horror they surrounded him, bound his hands and feet, and lifted him into one of their canoes. Then they turned towards shore, towing the three boats behind them.

Thorold, naturally supposing that they were keeping him for torture, and preferring immediate death to a deferred but more horrible fate, attempted to jump into the sea, or dash out his brains against the sides of the canoe; but they carefully prevented him from doing himself any harm. Arrived at the shore, they retired to their huts, leaving him still bound hand and foot upon the beach.

This was late in the afternoon, and all that night he lay there helpless, expecting every moment to be carried to the fire or some other torture. But they went about their business, gathering clams and muscles and eating them raw, collecting fuel and heaping up the fires, and never touched their prisoner at all; only they kept looking towards him, and crowds of little half-naked hideous children stood a few yards off and gazed at him in awe, and lean dogs came and snarled and sniffed at him suspiciously.

The tribe appeared to consist of between one and two hundred, and there were several rude huts formed of trees cut down and stuck close to one another in the ground, while their branches and foliage were tied together and formed an inefficient roof.

Fuegians appear to be insensible to cold, for though the climate is as cold or even colder than the extreme north of Scotland, they do not attempt to make comfortable huts for themselves, and they wear nothing but the light clothing which I have described. At night, however, most of them slept by the fires, like dogs on a winter's night.

All that night long Thomas Thorold lay bound upon the beach, trembling with cold and terror, and praying, 'Lord, now let me die!'

In the early morning he felt that his hour had come, for two or three of the Fuegians came towards him, and one of them had a knife in his hand. But when they had cut the fibre ropes that bound him they left him alone again, standing on the beach, free to do what he liked.

It was useless to think of flight, for their eyes were always upon him, and besides, one man could have done nothing with a boat in the sea outside the bay. So after a while he obeyed the

cravings of nature, and collected muscels and clams on the shore, as he had seen the natives do; and on this cold food he made a wretched breakfast.

Thus he spent all that day and all the next thirty-seven days, for he kept a careful count of the time. He ate only the miserable shell-fish that he found on the beach, drank water from a torrent that flowed down the mountain-side, and slept by one of the fires, which he boldly approached the first night after they unbound him, for he had experienced the cold of one wintry night, and that was enough.

They were neither kind nor unkind to him, but took no notice of him whatever; they never attempted to speak to him, even by signs, except on one occasion when he wandered too far from them, and one of them ran after him and made signs to him to go back.

During the leaden-footed days he necessarily observed how the natives passed their time, but he did so without the slightest interest, and was unable to relate many details about them. Most of the work, such as hewing wood and drawing water, was done by the women; the men did very little, but spent their time mostly in lying about their huts. Sometimes a few of them went off in their canoes seal hunting, and always returned with one or two seals; sometimes they went hunting inland, and returned with a guanaco—a species of llama: then they all immediately fell upon it, tore it to pieces, and ate it raw. If a dead seal was washed ashore, they ate it in the same way, gorging themselves on the putrid blubber and flesh.

After these disgusting feeds they lay on the ground for hours in a torpor, and Thorold could easily have stabbed them as they lay asleep, but that some of the weaker ones, having been unable to secure much of the food, were awake and ready to cast their spears at him. Moreover, if he had killed them all, he would have been no better off.

All these weeks he was in a horrible state of suspense as to why he was being kept alive and what torture was preparing for him, so much so that he was unable to sleep for terror, until forced into unconsciousness by fatigue.

But on the thirty-eighth day an event occurred which, although in itself gruesome and terrifying, put into his heart a hope that he might some day return to the outer world again, and gave him a clue as to what was his captors' only conceivable object in preserving him alive.

It was about noon, on a fine cold day, when Thorold, standing on the beach and looking out to sea, saw two whalers' boats pull round the headland to a distant part of the shore, where they proceeded to land and get fresh water. The huts of the Fuegians were between Thorold and the new-comers, who apparently did not perceive the natives, and were quietly filling their water-casks at a stream.

As Thorold was following his natural impulse to run to them, get into one of their boats, and make them row away, he was pinioned by three or four strong natives. Then a few canoes put out to cut off the boats, should they attempt to escape, and all the rest of the fighting men, and many of the women, caught up their long spears and ran towards their victims.

To Thorold's surprise, he was made to run along with them. The whalers' men were intercepted before they got off, and then it was the old ghastly tale repeated: they were shot down to a man with the poisoned spears. All the while the Fuegians who were holding Thorold made him understand that they wished him to watch what was going on, by gesticulating and pointing towards the slaughter.

After it was over they pillaged the dead bodies and the boats of everything they had, and then threw the corpses into the sea.

While Thorold was lying awake that night, and brooding over the horrible event, a sudden inspiration came to him that the object of the Fuegians in keeping him alive was to send him back to his people that he might tell them how they would be treated if they came to the land of the Fuegians—to declare unending war between themselves and the white world; and though, of course, he never knew for a certainty, yet the way in which they made him watch the slaughter of the whalers' men, and everything that happened before and after, pointed to this explanation of their conduct. From that night his great fear and suspense were mingled with this grain of hope.

The next morning the Fuegians collected their belongings, which consisted of nothing but spears and knives, a few skins, and some utensils for holding water, and marched inland, taking their prisoner with them. They spent about six hours a day on the march, over difficult mountain passes and down into deep valleys, making fires to sleep by at night, and living on guanacos, which they occasionally shot.

Thorold took little interest in observing the nature of the

country, but he reported it to be very similar to that seen on the coast—bleak mountains, with occasional copses of stunted trees, and all else absolutely barren and uncultivated. There is little doubt, however, that it is a treasure-house of mineral wealth, for various ores, including gold, are picked up in plenty on the coast, and there is every indication of coal. If a coal-mine was once got into working order here, it would be of inestimable value for the coaling of ships alone, as well as for use in South America itself, for coal is at present brought from England at great expense all the way to Monte Video, and to Sandy Point, in the straits of Magellan, from the north of Chili.

On the fourth day of the march they met another tribe, also on the march, and the two bodies of men fell to fighting at once, as is their invariable custom. After an hour's fighting there were only about fifty men left of the first tribe; these surrendered, and became prisoners of war to their conquerors, who had also sustained heavy losses. The prisoners, however, did not appear to be regarded as slaves at all, but simply mingled with the victorious tribe. After the battle the prisoners spoke to their captors about Thorold, whom they brought forward, apparently explaining their object in keeping him; and he lived with the new tribe on exactly the same footing as he had done with the old one.

Nearly six months Thorold spent in this way, the tribe in which he lived sometimes marching for five or six days, and then settling down for several weeks; sometimes they were on the sea-shore, and then he lived as they did, chiefly on raw mussels and other shell-fish; when they were inland he lived on pieces of raw guanaco, which he grabbed along with the others.

There is a story current in Chili that the Fuegians, when driven to necessity, first eat their dogs, the only domestic animal which they keep, and, when these are all gone, proceed to devour the old women of the tribe. Thorold saw no signs of cannibalism, but this was perhaps because no necessity for it arose. He states that the old women were treated with especial care; and it is doubtful whether this affection arose from the hearts or the stomachs of their grandchildren.

Five times he saw a fight with another tribe; in three out of the five his tribe was conquered, and he changed hands, the prisoners always appearing to explain to their captors their object in keeping him.

Among the third tribe with which he lived he saw a white

woman ; she was the Chilian lady whom I have already mentioned, and Thorold took the first opportunity of going up to her. The Fuegians held him back at first, for they regarded her as a goddess ; but at her command they let him approach her. They were unable to converse, for she spoke only Spanish, and he only English ; but from that time Thorold was treated by the natives with more deference than before.

He was never allowed again to approach the Chilian woman, who appeared to be rather ashamed of her situation before him, but he saw her manner of life. She was the wife of the chief, and had apparently a large number of children. The natives treated her with the greatest respect, and cooked meat for her, and made her a more elaborate hut than they made for themselves. Her dress was a mixture of civilisation and barbarism. On the whole she appeared satisfied with her strange life.

About four weeks after Thorold joined this tribe, another tribe came upon them ; there was a fight, and he changed hands. Just before the fight began the Chilian woman went away with a few companions, and he saw her no more.

Towards the end of the sixth month the tribe which possessed Thorold reached a place on the sea-shore which consisted of a bay almost shut in by land. He had often reached a similar place, for there are many bays on that coast with an island facing them.

On the morning of the third day after they had reached this spot he was on the beach gathering his usual breakfast of shell-fish, when he heard a sound that sent the blood rushing towards his heart. It was the familiar sound of a steamer, and looking up he saw the black smoke floating away in the wind.

Then he knew that he was on the shore of the Straits of Magellan, and before he had time to consider how to secure his safety he had dropped on the beach in a dead faint, for six months' living in horrible suspense, without shelter, and with the poorest apology for food, had left him very little of his old strength.

On that day the steamer 'Aconcagua,' of the Pacific Steam Navigation Company, bound from Liverpool to Valparaiso, left Sandy Point and was proceeding westward through the straits. The bulwarks were crowded with passengers and officers and crew looking out for native canoes, for it is the custom of steamers passing through these straits to slow down, unless they are in a great hurry, and interview the natives in their canoes, ending by

dropping over the ship's side a barrel filled with old clothes and tobacco and other things calculated to please the savage mind. Once or twice a couple of natives have been hoisted on board and shown round the steamer. With awe they gazed at the long saloon, and in horror they fled when they were taken down to the fire-room and a furnace door was suddenly opened at them, reminding them of a crater of one of the volcanoes that gave their land its name of Fire.

Before the awful adventure of Thorold, all that was known about these strange people was learnt in this way, and thus the curious fact was discovered that although their near neighbours the Patagonians will drink all the rum and other fire-water they can lay their hands on, the Fuegians will take no alcohol of any kind, but, when offered it, turn away with the same appearance of disgust that a dog shows under similar circumstances, in this way, among others, showing how low they stand in the scale of humanity. Tobacco, however, they greatly appreciate.

On this occasion the passengers of the 'Aconcagua' were not disappointed in their desire to see the natives. Several canoes were shooting out to meet them, and in one of them they saw to their intense surprise a white man standing up, and heard him shouting to them in English to 'stop for God's sake!' Of course they stopped. The canoes came alongside, and the white man was hauled up on deck without the slightest opposition from the Fuegians, and indeed by their evident desire.

On reaching the deck Thorold fainted. He was carried away and attended to by the doctor; and the natives, we may be sure, got a good toll that day. Several barrels were dropped over the ship's side, laden with all things that the savages could desire.

The rescued man soon recovered sufficiently to tell his wonderful story. He was taken to Valparaiso, and thence back again to England in the steamship 'Galicia,' as a distressed British seaman.

During the first part of the voyage his mental faculties appeared to be a good deal weakened. He would frequently hang over the bulwarks in a sort of stupor, and the doctor ordered any one who saw him in this state at once to approach him and touch him, and ask him what he was thinking of, until he answered them.

And the answer that came at last was always the same:—

'I was thinkin' of how the faces of my mates looked when them savages was murderin' of them.'



